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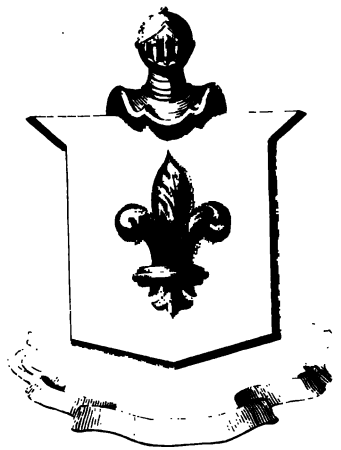

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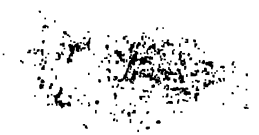
THE

Misfortunes of Arthur.

BY

THOMAS HUGHES.



THE

Misfortunes of Arthur.

BY

THOMAS HUGHES.

WITH

ILLUSTRATIONS AND NOTES

BY

J. PAYNE COLLIER, ESQ.

LONDON:

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THE

MISFORTUNES OF ARTHUR.

It appears that eight persons, Members of the Society of Gray's Inn, were engaged in the production of *The Misfortunes of Arthur* for the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth, at Greenwich, on the 8th Feb. 1587: viz. Thomas Hughes, the author of the whole body of the tragedy; William Fulbecke who wrote two speeches substituted on the representation and appended to the old printed copy; Nicholas Trotte who furnished the Introduction; Francis Flower who penned Choruses for the first and second acts; Christopher Yelverton, Francis Bacon and John Lancaster who devised the dumb shews, then usually accompanying such performances; and a person of the name of Penroodocke, who, assisted by Flower and Lancaster, "directed the proceedings at Court."

Regarding Hughes and Trotte no information has survived. Fulbecke was born in 1566, became, as we are told, an eminent writer on the law, and in the year when this tragedy was brought-out, published a work called "Christian Ethics." The "Maister Francis Bacon," spoken of at the conclusion of the piece, was of course no other than Lord Bacon; and it is a new feature in his biography, though not perhaps very prominent nor important, that he was so nearly concerned in the preparation of a play at Court: in Feb. 1587, he had just commenced his 28th year. Christopher Yelverton, as early as 1566, had written the epilogue to Gascoyne's *Jocasta*, and on the present occasion was probably resorted to for his experience in such undertakings. Regarding Flower, Lancaster, and Penroodocke we have nothing to communicate.

The Misfortunes of Arthur is a dramatic composition only known to exist in the Garrick Collection. Judging from internal evidence, it seems to have been printed with unusual care under the superintendence of the principal Author: in the course of it some lines and words were cancelled, and those which were substituted were

pasted over the objectionable passages. In the notes we have given both versions, and the whole is reprinted as nearly as possible in its original shape. The mere rarity of this unique drama would not have recommended it to our notice; but it is not likely that such a man as Lord Bacon would have lent his aid to the production of a piece which was not intrinsically good, and unless we much mistake, there is a richer and a nobler vein of poetry running through it, than is to be found in any previous work of the kind. The blank verse is generally free and flowing, although now and then deformed by alliteration, and rendered somewhat monotonous by the want of that variety of rythm, which Marlowe may be said to have introduced, and which Shakespeare scarcely exceeded.

Most of the characters, and particularly those of Arthur and Mordred, are drawn with distinctness and vigour: the fiery and reckless ambition of the son is excellently contrasted with the cool determination and natural affection of the father. As an illustration of the former we may refer to many passages, but especially to several in the third scene of the second act; while the character and disposition of the latter are depicted in a masterly manner both before and after the final battle: this catastrophe, as far as relates to the death of Mordred, is mentioned by Dante in Canto XXXII. of his *Inferno:*

> Non quelli a cui fu rotto il petto e l'ombra
> Con esso un colpo per la man d'Artu.

The substance of the story is to be found in the *Morte Arthur*. The action is one, but the unities of time and place are disregarded; and although the tragedy in many respects is conducted upon the plan of the ancients, there are in it evident approaches to the irregularity of our romantic drama. It forms a sort of connecting link between such pieces of unimpassioned formality as *Ferrex and Porrex*, and rule-rejecting historical plays, as Shakespeare found them and left them.

THE INTRODUCTION.

An Introduction penned by Nicholas Trotte, Gentleman, one of the Society of Grayes-Inne; which was pronounced in manner following: viz. Three Muses came on the stage apparelled accordingly, bringing five Gentlemen Students with them attyred in their usuall garments, whom one of the Muses presented to her Majestie as Captives: the cause whereof she delivered by speach as followeth.

Of conquest (gracious Queene) the signs and fruits,
Atchiv'd 'gainst such as wrongfully witheld
The service by choice wits to Muses due,
In humbliest wise these Captives we present.
And least your highnes might suspect the gift,
As spoile of warre that justice might impeach,
Heare and discerne how just our quarrell was,
Avowed* (as you see) by good successe.
A dame there is, whom men Astrea terme,
Shee that pronounceth oracles of lawes,
Who to prepare fit servants for her traine,
As by commission, takes up flowring wits,
Whom first she schooleth to forget and scorne
The noble skils of language and of arts,
The wisedome which discourse of stories teach,
The ornaments which various knowledge yeelds:
But Poesie she hath in most disdaine
And marshals its next Follye's scorned place.
Then, when she hath these worthy prints defac'd
Out of the mindes that can endure her hand,
What doth she then supplie in steede of these?
Forsooth, some olde reports of altered lawes,
Clamors of Courts, and cavils upon words,
Grounds without ground, supported by conceit,

* *Avowed*] i. e. *avouched*, from the Fr. *avouer*.

And reasons of more subtiltie then sense.
What shall I say of moote points strange, and doubts
Still argued, but never yet agreed?
And shee that doth deride the poets lawe,
Because he must his words in order place,
Forgets her formes of pleading, more precise,
More bound to words then is the poets lore:
And for these fine conceits she fitly chose
A tongue that barbarisme it selfe doth use.
We, noting all these wrongs, did long expect
There hard condition would have made them wise,
To offer us their service, plac'd so ill;
But finding them addicted to their choyce,
And specially desirous to present
Your Majestie with fruits of province new,
Now did resolve to double force and skill,
And found and usde the vantage of the time,
Surprisde their fort and tooke them captives all.
So now submisse, as to their state belongs,
They gladly yeelde their homage long withdrawne,
And Poetry which they did most contemne,
They glory now her favours for to weare.
My sisters laught to see them take the penne,
And lose their wits all in unwoonted walkes:
But to your highnes that delight we leave
To see these poets new their stile advaunce.
Such as they are, or naught or litle worth,
Deigne to accept, and therewith we beseech,
That novelty give price to worthlesse things.

Unto this speach one of the Gentlemen answered as followeth:

Good Ladies, unacquaint with cunning reach,
And easly led to glory in your powre,
Heare now abasht our late dissembled mindes.
Not now the first time, as your selves best knowe,
Ye Muses sought our service to commaund:
Oft have ye wandred from Pernassus hill,
And shewed your selves with sweet and tempting grace,

But yet returnd, your traine increasde with fewe.
This resolution doth continue still:
Unto Astrea's name we honour beare,
Whose sound perfections we doe more admire
Then all the vanted store of Muses guifts,
Let this be one (which last you put in ure
In well depraving that deserveth praise)
No eloquence, disguising reason's shape,
Nor Poetrie, each vaine affection's nurce,
No various historie, that doth leade the minde
Abroad to auntient tales from instant use,
Nor these, nor other moe, too long to note,
Can winne Astrea's servants to remove
Their service once devote to better things.
They, with attentive mindes and serious wits,
Revolve records of deepe judiciall acts;
They waigh, with steaddy and indifferent hand,
Each word of lawe, each circumstance of right;
They hold the grounds which time and use hath sooth'd,*
Though shallow sense conceive them as conceits,
Presumptuous sense, whose ignorance dare judge
Of things remov'd by reason from her reach.
One doubt, in mootes by argument encreas'd,
Cleares many doubts experience doth object.
The language she first chose, and still retaines,
Exhibites naked truth in aptest termes.
Our industrie maintaineth unimpeacht
Prerogative of Prince, respect to Peeres,
The Commons libertie and each mans right;
Suppresseth mutin force and practicke fraude,
Things that for worth our studious care deserve:
Yet never did we banish nor reject
Those ornaments of knowledge nor of toungs:
That slander envious ignorance did raise.
With Muses still we entercourse allowe,
T'enrich our state with all their forreine fraight;
But never homage nor acknowledgement,

* *sooth'd*] i. e. shewn to be *true*: the author has converted the substantive, *sooth*, into a verb.

Such as of subjects allegeance doth require.
Now heere the cause of your late conquest wonne.
We had discovered your intent to be
(And, sure, ye ladies are not secrete all;
Speach and not silence is the Muse's grace)
We well perceiv'd (I say) your minde to be
T'employ such prisoners, as themselves did yeeld,
To serve a Queene, for whom her purest gold
Nature refin'd, that she might therein sette
Both private and imperiall vertues all.
Thus (Soveraigne Lady of our lawes and us)
Zeale may transforme us into any shape.
We, which with trembling hand the penne did guide,
Never well pleasde, all for desire to please;
For still your rare perfections did occurre,
Which are admir'd of Muses and of men.
Oh! with howe steddie hand, and heart assur'd,
Should we take up the warlike lance or sword,
With mind resolv'd to spend our loyall blood
Your least commaund with speede to execute!
O! that before our time the fleeting shippe
Ne'r wandred had in watery wildernes,
That we might first that venture undertake,
In strange attempt t'approve our loyall hearts!
Be it souldiers, seamen, poets, or what els.
In service once enjoynd, to ready mindes
Our want of use should our devoyer encrease.
Now since in steade of art we bring but zeale,
In steade of prayse we humbly pardon crave.
The matter which we purpose to present,
Since streights of time our liberty controwles,
In tragike notes the plagues of vice recounts.
How sutes a tragedie for such a time?
Thus—for that since your sacred Majestie
In gratious hands the regall scepter held,
All tragedies are fled from state to stadge.

NICHOLAS TROTTE.

The misfortunes of Arthur (Uther Pendragons Sonne) reduced into tragicall notes by *Thomas Hughes* one of the societie of Grayes-Inne. And here set downe as it past from under his handes, and as it was presented, excepting certaine wordes and lines, where some of the Actors either helped their memories by brief omission, or fitted their acting by some alteration. With a note in the ende of such speaches as were penned by others, in lue of some of these hereafter following.

The Argument of the Tragedie.

At a banquet made by Uther Pendragon for the solemnising of his conquest against the Saxons, he fell inamoured of Igerna, wife to Gorlois Duke of Cornwell: who perceiving the king's passion, departed with his wife and prepared warres at Cornwell; where also, in a strong holde beyond him, hee placed her. Then the king levied an armye to suppresse him, but waxing impatient of his desire to Igerna, transformed himselfe, by Merlin his cunning, into the likenesse of Gorlois, and after his acceptance with Igerna he returned to his siedge, where he slew Gorlois. Igerna was delivered of Arthur and Anne, twins of the same birth. Uther Pendragon 15 years after, pursuing the Saxons, was by them poysoned. Arthur delighted in his sister Anne, who made him father of Mordred. Seventeene yeres after, Lucius Tiberius of Rome demanded a tribute, due by conquest of Cæsar. Arthur gathered his powers of 13 kinges besides his owne, and leaving his queene Guenevora in the tuition of Mordred, to whome likewise he committed the kingdome in his absence, arrived at Fraunce, where, after 9 yeares warres, he sent the slaine bodie of Tiberius unto Rome for the tribute. During this absence Mordred grew ambicious, for th'affecting whereof he made love to Guenevora, who gave eare unto him. Then by th' assistence of Gilla, a British Lord, hee usurped,

and for mainteinance entertayned with large promises the Saxons, Irish, Pictes, and Normands. Guenevora hearing that Arthur was alreadie embarked for returne, through despaire purposing diversley, sometimes to kill her husband, sometimes to kill her selfe, at last resolved to enter into religion. Arthur at his landing was resisted on the stronds of Dover, where he put Mordred to flight. The last fielde was fought at Cornwell, where after the death of one hundred and tweentie thousand, saving on either side 20, Mordred received his death, and Arthur his deadly wound.

The argument and manner of the first dumbe shewe.

Sounding the musicke, there rose three furies from under the stage, apparelled accordingly with snakes and flames about their blacke haires and garments. The first with a snake in the right hande, and a cup of wine, with a snake athwart the cup, in the left hand. The second with a firebrand in the right hande, and a Cupid in the left. The thirde with a whippe in the right hand and a Pægasus in the left. Whiles they went masking about the stage, there came from another place three nuns, which walked by themselves. Then after a full sight given to the beholders, they all parted, the furies to Mordred's house, the nuns to the cloister. By the first fury with the snake and cup was signified the banquet of Uther Pendragon, and afterward his death, which insued by the poysoned cup. The second furie with her firebrande and Cupid, represented Uther's unlawfull heate and love conceyved at the banquet, which never ceased in his posteritie. By the third, with her whip and Pægasus, was prefigured the cruelties and ambition which thence insued and continued to th' affecting of this tragedie. By the nuns was signified the remorse and dispaire of Guenevora, that wanting other hope tooke a nunrie for her refuge. After their departure the fowre which represented the Chorus tooke their places.

The Argument of the first Act.

1. In the first scene the spirit of Gorlois, Duke of Cornwell, the man first and most wronged in this historie, being dispoild both of wife, dukedom, and life, craveth revenge for these injuries, denouncing the whole misfortune insuing.
2. In the second scene Guenevora, hearing that Arthur was on the seas returning desperately, manaceth his death, from which intent she is disswaded by Fronia, a lady of her court, and privie to her secretes.
3. In the third scene Guenevora perplexedly mindeth her owne death, whence being diswaded by her sister, she resolveth to enter into religion.
4. In the fourth scene Mordred goeth about to perswade Guenevora to persist in her love, but misseth thereof; and then is exhorted by Conan (a noble man of Britain) to reconcile himselfe to his Father at his comming, but refuseth so to doe, and resolveth to keepe him from landing by battaile.

THE NAMES OF THE SPEAKERS.

GORLOIS, *Duke of Cornwalls Ghost.*
GUENEVORA, *the Queene.*
FRONIA, *a Lady of her trayne.*
ANGHARAD, *Sister to the Queene.*
MORDRED, *the Usurper.*
CONAN, *a faithful Counsellor.*
Nuntius of Arthurs landing.
The Heralt from Arthur.
GAWIN, *King of Albainie.*
GILLA, *a Brytishe Earle.*
GILLAMOR, *King of Ireland.*
CHELDRICH, *Duke of Saxonie.*
The Lorde of the Pictes.
ARTHUR, *King af great Brytain.*
CADOR, *Duke of Cornwall*
HOEL, *King of little Brittaine.*
The Heralt from Mordred.
ASCHILLUS, *King of Denmarke.*
The King of Norwaye.
A number of Souldiers.
Nuntius of the last battell.
GILDAS, *a noble man of Brytain.*

CHORUS.

THE FIRST ACT AND FIRST SCENE.

GORLOIS.*

SINCE thus through channells blacke of Limbo lake,
And deepe infernall floude of Stygian poole,
The gastly Caron's boat transported backe
Thy ghost from Pluto's pittes and glowming shade
To former light, once lost by destnies doome,
Where proude Pendragon, broylde with shamefull lust,
Dispoylde thee erst of wife, of lande and life,
Nowe, Gorlois, worke thy wish, cast here thy gaule,
Glutte on revenge! thy wrath abhorrs delayes.
What though (besides Pendragons poysoned end)
The vile reproach he wrought thee by thy phere,†
Through deepe increase of crymes alike is plagude;
And that the shame thou suffredst for his lusts
Reboundeth backe and stifeleth in his stocke,
Yet is not mischiefe's measure all fulfilde,
Nor wreake sufficient wrought. Thy murthered corse,
And dukedome reft for heavier vengeance cries.
Come, therefore, bloomes of setled mischiefe's roote
Come ech thing els what furie can invent,
Wreake all at once! Infect the ayre with plagues,
Till bad to worse, till worse to worst be turnde!
Let mischiefes know no meane, nor plagues an end!
Let th' ofsprings sinne exceede the former stocke!
Let none have time to hate his former fault,
But still with fresh supplie let punisht cryme
Increase, till tyme it make a complet sinne!

* Ben Jonson opens his *Catiline* with the ghost of Sylla "ranging for revenge," and he was only thirteen years old when *The Misfortunes of Arthur* was performed at Greenwich before the Queen. Hughes doubtless had the commencement of Seneca's *Thyestes* in his mind, and throughout he has been indebted more or less to that and other classical authorities. The ghost of Polydorus opens the *Hecuba* of Euripedes. The ghost of Gorlois in this instance speaks the prologue to the tragedy.

† *Phere* is companion, and is most ordinarily applied to the male sex: Gorlois, however, refers to the infidelity of his wife.

Goe to: some fact which no age shall allowe
Nor yet conceale, some fact must needes be darde,
That for the horror great and outrage fell
Thereof, may well beseeme Pendragons broode
And first, while Arthur's navies homewards flott,
Triumphantly bedeckt with Romaine spoyles,
Let Guenover expresse what franticke moodes
Distract a wife, when wronging wedlockes rights,
Both fond and fell, she loves and loathes at once.
Let deepe dispaire pursue, till loathing life,
Her hatefull heade in cowle and cloister lurke.
Let traiterous Mordred keepe his sire from shoare;
Let Bryttaine rest a pray for foreine powers;
Let sworde and fire, still fedde with mutuall strife,
Tourne all the kings to ghoastes: let civill warres
And discorde swell till all the realme be torne!
Even in that soyle whereof my selfe was Duke,
Where first my spowse Igerna brake her vowe,
Where this ungracious ofspring was begotte
In Cornwell, there, let Mordreds death declare,
Let Arthurs fatall wound bewray the wrong,
The murther vile, the rape of wife and weale,
Wherewith their sire incenst both Gods and man.
Thus thus Pendragons seede, so sowne and reapte,
Thus cursed imps, ill-borne and worse consum'd,
Shall render just revenge for parents crimes,
And penance due t' asswadge my swelling wrath.
The whiles, O Cassiopœa, gembright signe,
Most sacred sight, and sweet cœlestiall starre,
This clymat's joy, plac'd in imperiall throne,
With fragrant olive branche portending peace;
And whosoe'r besides, ye heavenly powers,
(Her stately trayne with influence divine,
And milde aspect all prone to Bryttaine's good)
Foresee what present plagues doe threate this isle,
Prevent not this my wreake. For you their rests
A happier age, a thousand yeares to come;
An age for peace, religion, wealth, and ease,
When all the world shall wonder at your blisse:
That, that is yours! Leave this to Gorlois ghoast.
And see where coms one engine of my hate,
With moods and manners fit for my revenge. [*Exit.*

THE SECOND SCENE.

GUENEVORA, FRONIA.

Guenevora. And dares he after nine yeares space returne,
And see her face whom he so long disdainde?
Was I then chose and wedded for his stale,
To looke and gape for his retirelesse sayles,
Puft back and flittering spread to every winde?
O wrong content with no revenge: seeke out
Undared plagues; teach Mordred how to rage:
Attempt some bloodie, dreadfull, irkesome fact,
And such as Mordred would were rather his.
Why stayest? It must be done! let bridle goe:
Frame out some trap beyonde all vulgar guile,
Beyond Medeas wiles: attempt some fact
That any wight unwildie* of her selfe,
That any spowse unfaithfull to her phere,
Durst ever attempt in most dispaire of weale.
Spare no revenge, b'it poyson, knyfe, or fire!

Fronia. Good Madame, temper these outragious moodes,
And let not will usurpe, where wit should rule.

Guenevora. The wrath that breatheth blood doth loath to lurke:
What reason most witholdes, rage wringes perforce.
I am disdainde: so will I not be long.
That very hour that he shall first arrive,
Shall be the last that shall aforde him life.
Though neither seas, nor lands, nor warres abrode
Sufficed for thy foyle, yet shalt thou finde
Farre woorse at home—thy deep displeased spowse.
Whate'er thou hast subdude in all thy stay
This hand shall now subdue; then stay thy fill.
What's this? my mind recoyles and yrkes these threats:
Anger delays, my griefe gynnes to asswage,

* *Unwildie*] i. e. unwieldy or *unmanageable* of herself—not having any controul over her actions. The sense is a little constrained.

My furie faintes, and sacred wedlockes faith
Presents it selfe. Why shunst thou fearfull wrath?
Adde coales a freshe—preserve me to this venge.
At lest exyle thy selfe to realmes unknowen,
And steale his wealth to helpe thy banish't state;
For flight is best. O, base and heartlesse feare!
Theft? Exyle? Flight? all these may fortune sende
Unsought; but thee beseemes more high revenge.
Come, spitefull fiends, come, heapes of furies fell,
Not one by one, but all at once! my breast
Raves not inough: it likes me to be filde
With greater monsters yet. My hart doth throbbe,
My liver boyles: somewhat my minde portendes,
Uncertayne what—but whatsoever it's huge.
So it exceede, be what it will, it's well.
Omit no plague, and none will be inough.
Wrong cannot be reveng'd but by excesse.
Fronia. O spare this heate! you yeelde too much to rage:
Y'are too unjust. Is there no meane in wrong?
Guenevora. Wrong claymes a meane when first you offer wronge:
The meane is vaine when wrong is in revenge.
Great harmes cannot be hidde: the griefe is small,
That can receave advise, or rule it selfe.
Fronia. Hatred concealde doth often happe to hurte,
But once profest, it oftner failes revenge.
How better tho wert to repress your yre:
A ladies best revenge is to forgive.
What meane is in your hate? how much so'er
You can invent or dare, so much you hate.
Guenevora. And would you know what meane there is in hate,
Call love to minde, and see what meane is there.
My love, redoubled love, and constant faith
Engaged unto Mordred workes so deepe,
That both my hart and marrow quite be burnt,
And synewes dried with force of woontlesse flames.
Desire to joy him still torments my mynde:
Feare of his want doth add a double griefe.

Loe, here the love that stirres this meanlesse hate.
Fronia. Echew it farre: such love impugnes the laws.
Guenevora. Unlawfull love doth like when lawfull lothes.
Fronia. And is your love of husband quite extinct?
Guenevora. The greater flame must needes delay the lesse:
Besides, his sore revenge I greatly feare.
Fronia. How can you then attempt a fresh offence?
Guenevora. Who can appoint a stint to her offence?
Fronia. But here the greatnesse of the fact should move.
Guenevora. The greater it, the fitter for my griefe.
Fronia. To kill your spowse?
Guenevora. A stranger and a foe.
Fronia. Your liedge and king.
Guenevora. He wants both realme and crowne.
Fronia. Nature affordes not to your sexe such strength.
Guenevora. Love, anguish, wroth will soon afforde inough.
Fronia. What rage is this?
Guenevora. Such as himselfe shall rue.
Fronia. Whom Gods doe presse inough will you annoy.
Guenevora. Whom Gods doe presse they bende; whom man annoyes
He breakes.
Fronia. Your griefe is more then his desertes.
Ech fault requires an equall hate: be not severe
Where crimes be light. As you have felt so greeve.
Guenevora. And seems it light to want him nine yeare space?
Then, to be spoilde of one I hold more dear?
Thinke all too much, b'it ne'r so just, that feedes
Continuall griefe: the lasting woe is worst.
Fronia. Yet let your highnesse shun these desperate moodes:
Cast of this rage and fell disposed minde.
Put not shame quite to flight: have some regard
Both of your sexe and future fame of life.

Use no such cruell thoughts as farre exceede
A manly minde, much more a woman's hart.
Guenevora. Well; shame is not so quite exilde, but that
I can and will respect your sage advise.
Your counsell I accept: give leave a while,
Till fiery wrath may slake and rage relent.
[*Exit Fronia.*

THE THIRD SCENE.

GUENEVORA. ANGHARAT.

Guenevora. The love that for his rage will not be rulde
Must be restrainde: fame shall receive no foile.
Let Arthur live; whereof to make him sure
My selfe will dye, and so prevent his harmes.
Why stayest thou thus amazde, O, slouthfull wrath?
Mischief is meant—dispatch it on thy selfe.
Angharat. Her breast, not yet appeasde from former rage,
Hath chaungde her wrath, which wanting meanes to worke
An others woe (for such is furie's woont)
Seekes out his owne, and raves upon it selfe.
Asswage (alas) that over fervent ire:
Through too much anger you offend too much.
Thereby the rather you deserve to live
For seeming worthy in your selfe to dye.
Guenevora. Death is decreed; what kinde of death I doubt:
Whether to dround or stifill up this breath
Or forcing bloud to dye with dint of knife.
All hope of prosperous hap is gone. My fame,
My faith, my spouse: no good is left unlost!
My selfe am left—there's left both seas and lands,
And sword, and fire, and chaines, and choice of harmes.

* These lines as they stand in the original are nonsense.
"Whether-to dround or stifill up *this* breath,
On sorcing blood to dye with dint of knife."

O gnawing easelesse griefe! who now can heale
My maymed minde? It must be healde by death.
Angharat. No mischiefe must be done whiles I be by;
Or if there must, there must be more then one.
If death it be you seeke, I seeke it too;
Alone you may not die, with me you may.
Guenevora. They that will drive th'unwilling to their death,
Or frustrate death in those that faine would die,
Offend alike. They spoile that bootelesse spare.
Angharat. But will my teares, and mournings move you nought?
Guenevora. Then it is best to die when friends doe mourne.
Augharat. Ech where is death! the fates have well ordainde,
That ech man may bereave himselfe of life
But none of death: death is so sure a doome,
A thousand wayes doe guide us to our graves.
Who then can ever come too late to that,
Whence, when h' is come, he never can returne?
Or what availes to hasten on our ends,
And long for that which destenies have sworne!
Looke back in time: too late is to repent
When furious rage hath once cut of the choice.
Guenevora. Death is an end of paine, no paine it selfe.
Is't meete a plague for such excessive wrong
Should be so short? Should one stroke answere all?
And wouldst thou dye? well, that contents the lawes:
What then for Arthurs ire? What for thy fame,
Which thou hast stainde? What for thy stock thou shamst?
Not death, nor life alone can give a full
Revenge: joine both in one—die and yet live:
Where paine may not be oft, let it be long.
Seeke out some lingring death, whereby thy corse
May neither touch the dead nor joy the quicke.
Die, but no cómmon death: passe natures boundes.
Angharat. Set plaintes aside: despaire yeelds no reliefe;

The more you search a wounde the more it stings.
Guenevora. When guiltie mindes torment them selves, they heale,
Whiles woundes be cur'd, griefe is a salve for griefe.
Angharat. Griefe is no just esteemer of our deedes.
What so hath yet been done proceedes from chaunce.
Guenevora. The minde and not the chaunce doth make th' unchast.
Angharat. Then is your *fault* from Fate; you rest excusde.
None can be deemed faultie for her Fate.
Guenevora. No Fate, but manners fayle when we offende.
Impute mishaps to Fates—to manners faultes.
Angharat. Love is an error that may blinde the best.
Guenevora. A mightie error oft hath seemde a sinne.
My death is vowed and death must needes take place.
But such a death as stands with just remorse:
Death to the world and to her slipperie joyes:
A full divorce from all this courtly pompe,
Where dayly pennance done for each offence
May render due revenge for every wrong.
Which to accomplish, pray my deerest friends
That they forthwith, attyrde in saddest guise,
Conduct me to the Cloister next hereby,
There to professe, and to renounce the world.
Angharat. Alas! what chaunge were that! from kingly rooffes
To cloistered celles—to live and die at once!
To want your stately troupes, your friends and kinne,
To shun the shewes and sights of stately court;
To see in sort alive your countries death.
Yea, what so'er even death it selfe withdrawes
From any els, that life withdrawes from you.
Yet since your highnes is so fully bent
I will obay: the whiles asswage your griefe. [*Exit.*

THE FOURTH SCENE.

MORDRED. GUENEVORA. CONAN.

Mordred. The houre which erst I alwaies feared most,
The certaine ruine of my desperate state,
Is happened now! why turnst thou (minde) thy back?
Why at the first assault doest thou recoile?
Trust to't: the angry Heavens contrive some spight,
And dreadfull doome t'augment thy cursed hap.
Oppose to ech revenge thy guiltie heade,
And shun no paine, nor plague fit for thy fact.
What shouldst thou feare, that seest not what to hope?*
No danger's left before—all's at thy backe.
He safely stands, that stands beyond his harmes.
Thine (death) is all that East and West can see:
For thee we live, our comming is not long:
Spare us but whiles we may prepare our graves.
Though thou wert slowe, we hasten of our selves.
The houre that gave did also take our lives:
No sooner men, then mortall were we borne.
I see mine ende drawes on, I feele my plagues.
Guenevora. No plague for one ill borne to dye as ill.
Mordred. O Queene! my sweete associate in this plunge
And desperate plight, beholde, the time is come,
That either justifies our former faults,
Or shortly sets us free from every feare.
Guenevora. My feare is past, and wedlock love hath woonne.
Retire we thither yet, whence first we ought
Not to have stir'd. Call backe chast faith againe.

* Milton has this thought, almost in the same words, allowing for the difference of an interrogation.
"For where no hope is left, is left no fear."
Par. Reg. III. 206.

The way that leads to good is ne'r to late:
Who so repents is guiltlesse of his crimes.
Mordred. What meanes this course? Is Arthur's wedlocke safe,
Or can he love, that hath just cause to hate?
That nothing else were to be feard:
Is most apparent, that he hates at home
What e'r he be whose fansie strayes abroad.
Thinke, then, our love is not unknowen to him,
Whereof what patience can be safely hopte?
Nor love nor soveraigntie can beare a peere.
Guenevora. Why dost thou still stirre up my flames delayde?
His strayes and errors must not move my minde:
A law for private men bindes not the king.
What, that I ought not to condemne my liedge,
Nor can, thus guiltie to myne owne offence!
Where both have done amisse, both will relent:
He will forgive that needes must be forgiven.
Mordred. A likely thing, your faults must make you friends;
What sets you both at oddes must joine you both.
Thinke well, he casts already for revenge,
And how to plague us both. I know his law;
A judge severe to us, milde to him selfe.
What then availes you to returne to late,
When you have past to farre? You feede vaine hopes.
Guenevora. The further past, the more this fault is yours.
It serv'd your turne t'usurpe your father's crowne:
His is the crime, whom crime stands most in steede.
Mordred. They that conspire in faults offend a like:
Crime makes them equall whom it jointly staines.
If for my sake you then pertooke my guilt,
You cannot guiltlesse seeme: the crime was joint.
Guenevora. Well should* she seeme most guiltlesse unto thee,
What e'r she be, that's guiltie for thy sake.

* The word *should* is accidentally repeated in this line in the old copy.

The remnant of that sober minde, which thou
Hadst heretofore nere vanquish't, yet resists.
Suppresse, for shame, that impious mouth so taught,
And so much skil'd t'abuse the wedded bed.
Looke backe to former fates: Troy still had stoode
Had not her Prince made light of wedlocks lore.
The vice that threw downe Troy doth threat thy throne.
Take heed: there Mordred stands whence Paris fell.
[*Exit.*

Conan. Since that your highnes knowes for certaine truth
What power your sire prepares to claime his right,
It neerely now concernes you to resolve
In humbliest sort to reconcile your selfe
Gainst his returne.

Mordred. Will warre?

Conan. That lies in chaunce.

Mordred. I have as great a share in chaunce as he.

Conan. His waies be blinde that maketh chaunce his guide.

Mordred. Whose refuge lies in chaunce, what dares he not?

Conan. Warres were a crime farre worse then all the rest.

Mordred. The safest passage is from bad to worse.

Conan. That were to passe too farre, and put no meane.

Mordred. He is a foole that puts a meane in crimes.

Conan. But sword and fire would cause a common wound.

Mordred. So sword and fire will often seare the soare.

Conan. Extremest cures must not be used first.

Mordred. In desperate times the head-long way is best.

Conan. Y'have many foes.

Mordred. No more then faythfull friends.

Conan. Trust to't, their faith will faint where fortune failes.
Where many men pretend a love to one
Whose power may doe what good or harme he will,
'Tis hard to say which be his faithfull friends.

Dame Flatterie flitteth oft: she loves and hates
With time, a present friend an absent foe.
Mordred. But yet y'll hope the best.*
Conan. Even then you feare
The worst: feares follow hopes as fumes doe flames.
Mischief is sometimes safe, but ne'r secure.
The wrongfull Scepter's held with trembling hand.
Mordred. Whose rule wants right, his safety's in his sword;
For sword and sceptre comes to kings at once.
Conan. The kingliest point is to affect but right.
Mordred. Weake is the scepters hold that seekes but right,
The care whereof hath hath danger'd many crownes.
As much as water differeth from the fire,
So much man's profit jarres from what is just.
A free recourse to wrong doth oft secure
The doubtfull seate, and plucks downe many a foe.
The sword must seldome cease: a soveraigne's hand
Is scantly safe, but whiles it smites. Let him
Usurpe no crowne that likes a guiltles life:
Aspiring power and justice sield agree.
He alwaies feares that shames to offer wrong.
Conan. What sonne would use such wrong against his sire?
Mordred. Come sonne, come sire, I first preferre my selfe;
And since a wrong must be, then it excels
When 'tis to gaine a crowne. I hate a peere;
I loath, I yrke, I doe detest a head.
B'it nature, be it reason, be it pride,
I love to rule! my minde, nor with, nor by,
Nor after any claimes, but chiefe and first!
Conan. But thinke what fame and grievous bruits would runne
Of such disloyall and unjust attempts.
Mordred. Fame goes not with our ghosts: the senseless soule

* "But yet y'll hope the best" is by mistake given to Conan in the old copy.

Once gone, neglects what vulgar bruite reports.
She is both light and vaine.
Conan. She noteth though.
Mordred. She feareth states.*
Conan. She carpeth ne'r the lesse.
Mordred. She's soone suppresst.
Conan. As soone she springs againe.
Toungs are untam'de, and fame is envyes dogge,
That absent barkes, and present fawnes as fast.
It fearing dares, and yet hath never done,
But dures: though death redeeme us from all foes
Besides, yet death redeemes us not from toungs.†
Mordred. E'r Arthur land, the sea shall blush with blood,
And all the stronds with smoaking slaughters reeke.
Now (Mars) protect me in my first attempt!
If Mordred scape, this realme shall want no warres.
[*Exeunt.*

CHORUS.

1.

See here the drifts of Gorlois, Cornish Duke,
And deepe desire to shake his Soveraignes throne.
How foule his fall, how bitter his rebuke,
Whiles wife, and weale, and life, and all be gone!
He now in hell tormented wants that good.
Lo, lo, the end of trayterous bones and blood!

2.

Pendragon broylde with flames of filthy fires,
By Merlin's mists injoyde Igerna's bed;
Next spoiled Gorlois, doubling his desires;
Then was himselfe through force of poyson sped.
Who sowes in sinne, in sinne shall reap his paine:
The doome is sworne—death guerdons death againe.

* In the old copy Mordred's reply is made a part of Conan's observation.

† By an apparent error in the original the five preceding lines are given to Mordred.

3.

Whiles Arthur warres abroade and reapes renowne,
Guenevora preferres his sonnes desire;
And trayterous Mordred still usurpes the crowne,
Affording fuell to her quenchlesse fire.
But death's too good, and life too sweete for thease,
That wanting both should taste of neither's ease.

4.

In Rome the gaping gulfe would not decrease,
Till Curtius corse had closde her yawning jawes:
In Theb's the rotte and murreine would not cease,
Till Laius broode had paide for breach of lawes:
In Brytain warres and discord will not stent,
Till Uther's line and offspring quite be spent.

The Argument of the second Act.

1. In the first Scene, a Nuntio declareth the successe of Arthur's warres in France, and Mordred's foile, that resisted his landing.

2. In the second Scene, Mordred enraged at the overthrow voweth a second battaile, notwithstanding Conans disswasion to the contrarie.

3. In the third Scene, Gawin (brother to Mordred by the mother) with an Heralt from Arthur to imparle of peace, but after some debate thereof, peace is rejected.

4. In the fourth Scene, the King of Ireland, and other forrein Princes assure Mordred of their assistance against Arthur.

The Argument and manner of the second dumb shewe.

Whiles the musicke sounded there came out of Mordred's house, a man stately attyred, representing a king, who walking once about the stage. Then out of the house appointed for Arthur there came three

Nymphes apparrailed accordingly, the first holding a Cornucopia in her hand, the second a golden braunch of olive, the third a sheaffe of corne. These orderly, one after another, offered these presents to the king who scornefully refused: a second after which, there came a man bareheaded, with long black shagged haire down to his shoulders, apparrailed with an Irish jacket and shirt, having an Irish dagger by his side, and a dart in his hand. Who first with a threatning countenance looking about, and then spying the king, did furiously chase and drive him into Mordred's house. The king represented Mordred; the three Nymphes with their proffers the treatice of peace, for the which Arthur sent Gawin with an Herault unto Mordred, who rejected it: the Irishman signified Revenge and Furie, which Mordred conceived after his foile on the shoares, whereunto Mordred headlong yeeldeth himselfe.

THE SECOND ACT AND FIRST SCENE.

NUNTIUS.

Nuntius. Lo, here at length the stately type of Troy,
And Brytain land the promist seate of Brute,
Deckt with so many spoyles of conquered kings!
Haile native soyle, these nine yeares space unseene!
To thee hath long-renowmed Rome at last
Help up her hands, bereaft of former pompe.
But first, inflamde with woonted valures heate,
Amidst our sorest siedge and thickest broyles
She stoutly fought, and fiercely waged warres.
Tiberius courage gave, upbraiding oft
The Romane force, their woonted lucke, and long
Retained rule by warres throughout the world.
What shame it were, since such atchived spoiles,
And conquests gaind both farre and wide, to want
Of courage then, when most it should be mov'd!

How Brytaines erst paide tribute for their peace,
But now rebell and dare them at their doores.
For what was Fraunce but theirs? Herewith incenst
They fiercely rav'd, and bent their force a fresh.
Which Arthur spying, cryed with thundring voyce;
Fye (Brytaines) fye! what hath bewitcht you thus?
So many nations foilde, must Romans foile?
What slouth is this? Have you forgot to warre,
Which n'er knew houre of peace? turne to your foes,
Where you may bath in blood and fight your fill.
Let courage worke! what can he not that dares?
Thus he, puissant guide in doubtfull warres,
Ashamde to shun his foes, inflamde his friends.
Then yeelding to his stately stead the raignes,
He furious drives the Romaine troupes about:
He plies each place, least fates mought alter ought,
Pursuing hap, and urging each successe.
He yeelds in nought, but instantly persists
In all attempts, wherein what so withstands
His wish, he joyes to worke away by wracke;
And matching death to death, no passage seekes
But what destruction works with blade or blood.
He scornes the yeelded way: he fiercely raves
To breake and bruse the ranks in thickest throngs,
All headlong bent and prone to present spoile.
The foes inforc'd withstand; but much dismaide
They senselesse fight, while millions lose their lives.
At length Tiberius, pierst with point of speare,
Doth bleeding fall, engoard with deadly wound.
Hereat the rest recoile and headlong flie,
Each man to save himselfe. The battaile quailes,
And Brytaine's winne unto their most renowne.
Then Arthur tooke Tiberius breathlesse corse,
And sent it to the Senators at Rome,
With charge to say:—This is the tribute due
Which Arthur ought; as time hereafter serves
He'il pay the like againe, the whiles he rests
Your debtor thus.—But O! this sweete successe
Pursu'd with greater harmes, turn'd soone to sowre.
For lo, when forreine soiles and seas were past

With safe returne, and that the king should land,
Who but his onely sonne (O outrage rare)
With hugie hoast withstood him on the shoare!
There were preparde the forreine aides from farre;
There were the borowed powers of divers kings;
There were our parents, brethren, sonnes and kinne,
Their wrath, their ire; there Mordred was thy rage.
Where erst we sought abroade for foes to foile,
Beholde, our Fates had sent us foes unsought.
When forreine realmes supplanted want supplie,
O blessed home, that hath such boonne in store!
But let this part of Arthur's prowesse lurke,
Nor let it e'r appeare by my report,
What monstrous mischiefes rave in civill warres.
O, rather let due teares and waylings want!
Let all in silence sinke what hence insu'd.
What best deserveth mention here is this:
That Mordred vanquisht trusted to his flight,
That Arthur ech where victor is returnd.
And lo, where Mordred comes with heavy head:
He wields no slender waight that weilds a crowne.

[*Exit.*

THE SECOND SCENE.

MORDRED. CONAN.

Mordred. And hath he wonne? Be stronds and shoares possest?
Is Mordred foilde? the realme is yet unwonne,
And Mordred lives, reserv'd for Arthur's death!
Well, 'twas my first conflict: I knew not yet
What warres requir'd; but now my sworde is flesht,
And taught to goare and bath in hoatest bloode.
Then thinke not Arthur that the crowne is wonne!
Thy first successe may rue our next assault;
Even at our next incounter (hap when 'twill)
I vowe by Heaven, by Earth, by Hell, by all,
That either thou, or I, or both shall dye!

Conan. Nought should be rashly vowde against your sire.

Mordred. Whose breast is free from rage may soone b'advisde.
Conan. The best redresse from rage is to relent.
Mordred. 'Tis better for a king to kill his foes.
Conan. So that the subjects also judge them foes.
Mordred. The subjects must not judge their king's decrees.
Conan. The subjects force is great.
Mordred. *Greater the kings.
Conan. The more you may, the more you ought to feare.
Mordred. He is a foole that feareth what he may.
Conan. Not what you may, but what you ought is just.
Mordred. He that amongst so many, so unjust,
Seekes to be just, seekes perill to himselfe.
Conan. A greater perill comes by breach of lawes.
Mordred. The lawes do licence as the Soveraigne lists.
Conan. Lest ought he list whom lawes doe licence most.
Mordred. Imperiall power abhorres to be restrainde.
Conan. As much doe meaner groomes† to be compeld
Mordred. The fates have heav'de and raisde my force on high.
Conan. The gentler should you presse those that are low.
Mordred. I would be feard.
Conan. The cause why subjects hate.
Mordred. A kingdom's kept by feare.
Conan. And lost by hate.
He feares as man himselfe whom many feare.
Mordred. The timerous subject dares attempt no chaundge.
Conan. What dares not desperate dread?

* Arthur's name is misprinted for that of Mordred in this place in the original.

† It stands *roomes* in the old copy, but to make sense of the line we must read *groomes*.

*Mordred.** What torture threats.
Conan. O spare! tweare safer to be lovde.
Mordred. As safe
To be obaide.
Conan. Whiles you command but well.
Mordred. Where rulers dare commaund but what is well,
Powre is but prayer, commaundment but request.
Conan. If powre be joynde with right, men must obay.
Mordred. My will must go for right.
Conan. If they assent.
Mordred. My sword shall force assent.
Conan. No—Gods forbid.
Mordred. What! shall I stande whiles Arthur sheads my bloode?
And must I yeelde my necke unto the axe?
Whom fates constrayne, let him forgoe his blisse;
But he that needlesse yeldes unto his bane,
When he may shunne, doth well deserve to loose
The good he cannot use. Who would sustaine
A baser life, that may maintaine the best?
We cannot part the crowne: a regall throne
Is not for two: the scepter fittes but one.
But whether is the fitter of us two,
That must our swordes decerne, and shortly shall.
Conan. How much were you to be renowmed more,
If casting off these ruinous attempts,
You would take care how to supplie the losse,
Which former warres and forraine broyles have wrought;
Howe to deserve the people's heartes with peace,
With quiet rest, and deepe desired ease:
Not to increase the rage that long hath raignde,
Nor to destroy the realme you seeke to rule.
Your father rearde it up, you plucke it downe.
You loose your country whiles you winne it thus:
To make it yours you strive to make it none.

* This reply, which belongs to Mordred, is given to Conan in the old copy.

Where kings impose too much the commons grudge;*
Goodwill withdrawes; assent becomes but slowe.
Mordred. Must I to gaine renowne incurre my plague,
Or hoping prayse sustaine an exiles life?
Must I for countries ease disease my selfe,
Or for their love dispise my own estate?†
No. 'Tis my happe that Brytain serves my tourne;
That feare of me doth make the subjects crouch;
That what they grudge they do constrayned yeeld.
If their assents be slowe, my wrath is swift:
When favour failes to bend, let furie breake.
If they be yet to learne, let terrour teach
What kings may doe, what subjects ought to beare.
Then is a kingdome at a wished staye
When whatsoever the sovereigne willes, or nilles,
Men be compelde as well to praise as beare,
And subjects willes inforc'd against their willes.
Conan. But who so seekes true praise and just renowne,
Would rather seeke their praysing heartes then tongues.
Mordred. True praise may happen to the basest groome;
A forced prayse to none but to a prince.
I wish that most that subjects most repine.
Conan. But yet where warres doe threaten your estate,
There needeth friendes to fortifie your crowne.
Mordred. Ech crowne is made of that attractive mould,
That of it selfe it drawes a full defence.

* Instead of the words "commons grudge," "Realme envies" has been substituted and wafered over the text. The alteration, like some others, seems to have been originally pasted upon the objectionable passage.

† The following were substituted for the four preceding lines.

"The first art in a kingdome is to scorne
The envie of the realme. He cannot rule
That feares to be envide. What can divorce
Envie from Soveraigntie? Must my deserts?"

Conan. That is a just and no usurped crowne;
And better were an exiles life, then thus
Disloyally to wronge your sire and liedge.
Thinke not that impious crimes can prosper long:
A time they scape, in time they be repaide.
Mordred. The hugest crimes bring best successe to some.
Conan. Those some be rare.
Mordred. Why may not I be rare?
Conan. It was their hap.
Mordred. It is my hope.
Conan. But hope
May misse, where hap doth hurle.
Mordred. So hap may hit,
Where hope doth aime.
Conan. But hap is last, and rules
The stearne.
Mordred. So hope is first and hoists the saile.
Conan. Yet feare; the first and last doe sielde agree.
Mordred. Nay dare; the first and last have many meanes.
But cease at length; your speach molests me much.
My minde is fixt: give Mordred leave to doe
What Conan neither can allow, nor like.
Conan. But loe, an Herault sent from Arthurs hoast.
Gods graunt his message may portend our good.*

THE THIRD SCENE.

HERAULT, GAWIN, MORDRED.

Herault. Your sire, (O Prince) considering what distresse
The realme sustaines by both your mutuall warres,
Hath sent your brother Gawin, Albane king,
To treate of truce, and to imparle of peace.

* It does not appear whether Conan goes out, or stands by listening to the dialogue between Mordred and Gawin in the following scene.

Mordred. Speake, brother: what commaundment
sends our sire?
What message doe you bring? My life or death?
Gawin. A message farre unmeete, most needfull tho.
The sire commaunds not where the sonne rebels:
His love descends too deepe to wish your death.
Mordred. And mine ascends too high to wish his life.
Gawin. Yet thus he offreth. Though your faults
be great,
And most disloyall, to his deepe abuse,
Yet yeelde your selfe, he 'il be as prone to grace
As you to ruth—an uncle, sire, and liedge.
And fitter were your due submission done,
Then wrongfull warres to reave his right and realme.
Mordred. It is my fault that he doth want his right:
It is his owne to vexe the realme with warres.
Gawin. It is his right that he attempts to seeke:
It is your wrong that driveth him thereto.
Mordred. 'Tis his insatiate minde, that is not so
content,
Which hath so many kingdomes more besides.
Gawin. The more you ought to tremble at his
powre.
Mordred. The greater is my conquest if I winne.
Gawin. The more your foile if you should hap to
loose:
For Arthur's fame and vallure's such, as you
Should rather imitate, or at the least
Envie, if hope of better fansies failde:
For whereas envie raignes, though it repines,
Yet doth it feare a greater then it selfe.
Mordred. He that envies the valure of his foe
Detects a want of valure in himselfe.
He fondly fights that fights with such a foe,
Where t'were a shame to loose, no praise to winne;
But with a famous foe, succeede what will,
To win is great renowne, to loose lesse foile.
His conquests, were they more, dismaie me not:
The oftner they have beene the more they threat:
No danger can be thought both safe and oft;

And who hath oftner waged warres then he?
Escapes secure him not: he owes the price:
Whom chaunce hath often mist, chaunce hits at length;
Or if that chaunce have furthered his successe,
So may she mine, for chaunce hath made me king.
Gawin. As chaunce hath made you king, so chaunce may change.
Provide for peace: that's it the highest piers,
No state except, even conquerours ought to seeke.
Remember Arthurs strength, his conquests late,
His fierie minde, his high aspiring heart.
Marke then the oddes: he expert, you untried;
He ripe, you greene. Yeelde you whiles yet you may;
He will not yeelde: he winnes his peace with warres.
Mordred. If chaunce may chaunge, his chaunce was last to winne;
The likelier now to loose. His hautie heart
And minde I know: I feele mine owne no lesse.
As for his strengh and skill, I leave to happe.
Where many meete, it lies not all in one.
What though he vanquisht have the Romaine troupes,
That bootes him not: him selfe is vanquisht here.
Then waigh your wordes againe: if conquerours ought
To seeke for peace, the conquered must perforce.
But he'ill not yeelde; he'il purchase peace with warres.
Well, yeelde that will; I neither will nor can.
Come peace, come warres, chuse him; my dangers his,
His saffetie mine: our states doe stande alike.
If peace be good, as good for him as me;
If warres be good, as good for me as him.
Gawin. What cursed warres (alas) were those, wherein
Both sonne and sire shoulde so oppose themselves!
Him whome you nowe, unhappie man, pursue,
If you should winne your selfe would first bewayle.
Give him his crowne: to keepe it perill breeds.
Mordred. The crowne Ile keepe my selfe, insue what will.
Death must be once; how soon I lest respect.
He best provides that can beware in time,

Not why nor when, but whence and where he fals.
What foole, to live a year or twaine in rest,
Would loose the state and honour of a crowne?
Gawin. Consider then your fathers griefe and want,
Whom you bereave of kingdome, realme and crowne.
Mordred. Trust me, a huge and mightie kingdome 'tis
To beare the want of kingdome, realme and crowne.
Gawin. A common want which woorkes ech worldings woe,
That many have too much, but none inough.
It were his praise could he be so content,
Which makes you guiltie of the greater wrong.
Wherefore thinke on the doubtfull state of warres.
Where Mars hath sway, he keepes no certayne course:
Sometimes he lettes the weaker to prevaile,
Some times the stronger stoupes: hope feare and rage
With eylesse lott rules all uncertayne good,
Most certaine harmes be his assured happes.
No lucke can last; now here, now there it lights;
No state alike, chaunce blindly snatcheth all,
And fortune maketh guiltie whom she listes.
Mordred. Since, therefore, feare and hope and happe in warres
Be all obscure till their successe be seene,
Your speech doth rather drive me on to trie,
And trust them all, mine onely refuge now.
Gawin. And feare you not so strange and uncouth warres?
Mordred. No, were they warres that grew from out the ground.
Gawin. Nor yet your sire so huge, your selfe so small?
Mordred. The smallest axe may fell the hugest oake.
Gawin. Nor that in felling him, your selfe may fall?
Mordred. He falleth well, that falling fells his foe.
Gawin. Nor common chaunce, whereto each man is thrall?
Mordred. Small manhood were to turne my backe to chaunce.

Gawin. Nor that if chaunce affliot kings brooke it not?

Mordred. I beare no breast so unpreparde for harmes.

Even that I hold the kingliest point of all
To brooke afflictions well; and by how much
The more his state and tottering empire sagges,
To fixe so much the faster foote on ground.
No feare but doth forejudge, and many fall
Into their fate, whiles they doe feare their fate.
Where courage quailes, the feare exceeds the harme:
Yea, worse than warre it selfe is feare of warre.*

Gawin. Warre seemeth sweete to such as have not tried;

But wisedome wils we should forecast the worst.
The end allowes the act: that plot is wise
That knowes his meanes, and least relies on chance.
Eschue the course where errour lurkes; there growes
But griefe where paine is spent, no hope to speed.
Strive not above your strength; for where your force
Is over matche with your attempts, it faints,
And fruitlesse leaves what bootlesse it began.

Mordred. All things are rulde in constant course: no fate

But is foreset—the first daie leades the last.
No wisedome, then, but difference in conceit
Which workes in many men as many mindes.
You love the meane and followe virtues race:
I like the top and aime at greater blisse.
You rest content: my minde aspires to more:
In briefe, you feare, I hope; you doubt, I dare.
Since, then, the sagest counsailes are but strifes
Where equall wits may wreast each side alike,
Let counsaile go: my purpose must proceede.
Each likes his course, mine owne doth like me best.

* *Pejor est bello timor ipse belli—*
Seneca, Thyestes, A. III. Chor.
Jasper Heywood (*Thyestes faithfully Englished.* London: 1560) thus translates this passage
"Worse is then warre it selfe the feare of fyght."

Wherefore e'r Arthur breath or gather strength,
Assault we him, least he assault us first.
He either must destroie, or be destroide:
The mischiefes in the midst; catch he that can.
Gawin. But will no reason rule that desperate minde?
Mordred. A fickle minde that every reason rules.
I rest resolv'd, and to my sire say thus:—
If here he stay but three daies to an end,
And not forthwith discharge his band and hoast,
'Tis Mordred's oath, assure himselfe to die.
But if he finde his courage so to serve,
As for to stand to his defence with force,
In Cornewalle, if he dare, I'le trye it out.
Gawin. O strange contempt! like as the craggy rocke
Resists the streames and flings the waltering waves
Aloofe, so he rejects and scornes my words. [*Exit.**

THE FOURTH SCENE.

GILLA, GILLAMOR, CHELDRICHUS, DUX PICTORUM, CONAN.

Mordred. Lo, where (as they decreed) my faithfull friends
Have kept their time. Be all your powers repaird?
Gilla. They be, and all with ardent mindes: to Mars
They cry for warres, and longing for th' allarme,
Even now they wish t'incounter with their foes.
Mordred. What could be wisht for more? puissant king,
For your great helpe and valiant Irish force,
If I obtaine the conquest in these warres,
Whereas my father claimes a tribute due
Out of your realme, I here renounce it quite:
And if assistance neede in doubtfull times,
I will not faile to aide you with the like.
Gillamor. It doth suffice me to discharge my realme,

* i. e. Gawin: the Herald went out before.

Or at the least, to wreke me on my foes.
I rather like to live your friend and piere,
Then rest in Arthur's homage and disgrace.
Mordred. Right noble duke, through whom the Saxons vowe
Their lives with mine, for my defence in warres,
If we prevaile and may subdue our foes,
I will, in liew of your so high deserts,
Give you and yours all Brytish lands that lie
Betweene the floud of Humber and the Scottes:
Besides as much in Kent as Horsus and
Hengistus had, when Vortigern was king.
Cheldrichus. Your gracious proffers I accept with thankes;
Not for the gaine, but for the good desire
I have henceforth to be your subject here
May thereby take effect; which I esteeme
More then the rule I beare in Saxon soile.
Mordred. (Renowmed lord) for your right hardy Picts
And chosen warriers to maintaine my cause,
If our attempts receive a good successe,
The Albane crowne I give to you and yours.
Dux Pictorum. Your highnes bountie in so high degree,
Were cause inough to move me to my best:
But sure yourselfe, without regard of meede,
Should finde both me and mine at your commaund.
Mordred. Lord Gilla, if my hope may take successe,
And that I be thereby undoubted king,
The Cornish dukedome I allot to you.
Gilla. My liedge, to further your desir'd attempts,
I joyfully shall spend my dearest blood:
The rather, that I found the king, your sire,
So heavy lord to me, and all my stocke,
Mordred. Since then our rest is on't, and we agreed,
To warre it out, what resteth now but blowes?
Drive destnies on with swords, Mars frames the meanes!
Henceforth what Mordred may, now lies in you.
Ere long, if Mars insue with good successe,
Looke, whatsoe'r it be that Arthur claimes
By right or wrong, or conquests gaind with blood

In Brytaine, or abroad, is mine to give:—
To shewe, I would have said: I cannot give
What every hand must give unto it selfe.
Whereof who lists to purchase any share,
Now let him seeke and winne it with his sword:
The fates have laid it open in the field.
What starres (O heavens) or poles, or powers divine
Doe graunt so great rewards for those that winne!
Since then our common good, and ech man's care
Requires our joint assistance in these toyles,
Shall we not hazard our extreamest hap,
And rather spend our fates, then spare our foes?
The cause I care for most is chiefely yours;
This hand and hart shall make mine owne secure.
That man shall see me foiled by my selfe,
What'er he be, that sees my foe unfoilde.
Fear not the feild because of Mordred's faults,
Nor shrinke one jotte the more for Arthur's right.
Full safely fortune guideth many a guilt,
And fates have none but wretches whom they wrenche.
Wherefore make speede to cheare your souldiers harts,
That to their fires you yet may adde more flames.
The side that seekes to winne in civill warres
Must not content it selfe with woonted heate.

[*Exeunt omnes, præter Mordred and Conan.*

Conan. Would God your highnes had beene more advisde,
Ere too much will had drawen your wits too farre!
Then had no warres indangerd you nor yours,
Nor Mordreds cause required forreine care.

Mordred. A troubled head: my minde revolts to feare,
And beares my body backe. I inwards feele my fall:
My thoughts misgeve me much. Downe terror! I
Perceive mine ende, and desperate though, I must
Despise dispaire, and somewhat hopelesse hope.
The more I doubt the more I dare: by feare
I finde the fact is fittest for my fame.
What though I be a ruine to the realme,
And fall my selfe therewith? no better end:

His last mishaps doe make a man secure.
Such was king Priams ende, who, when he dyed,
Closde and wrapt up his kingdome in his death.
A solemne pompe, and fit for Mordred's minde,
To be a grave and tombe to all his realme. [*Exeunt.*

CHORUS.

1.

Ye princely peeres, extold to seates of state,
Seeke not the faire that soone will turne to fowle:
Oft is the fall of high and hovering fate,
And rare the roome which time doth not controwle.
The safest seate is not on highest hill,
Where windes and stormes and thunders thumpe their ill:
Farre safer were to follow sound advise,
Then for such pride to pay so deare a price.

2.

The mounting minde that climes the hauty cliffes,
And soaring seekes the tip of lofty type,
Intoxicats the braine with guiddy drifts,
Then rowles and reeles and falles at length plum ripe.
Loe, heaving hie is of so small forecast,
To totter first, and tumble downe at last.
Yet Pægasus still reares himselfe on hie,
And coltishly doth kicke the cloudes in skie.

3.

Who sawe the griefe engraven in a crowne,
Or knew the bad and bane whereto it's bound,
Would never sticke to throwe and fling it downe,
Nor once vouchsafe to heave it from the ground.
Such is the sweete of this ambitious powre,
No sooner had, then turnes eftsoones to sowre:
Atchiev'd with envie, exercisde with hate,
Garded with feare, supported with debate.

4.

O restlesse race of high aspyring head!
O worthlesse rule, both pittyed and envied!
How many millions to their losse you lead,
With love and lure of kingdomes blisse untryed!
So things untasted cause a quenchlesse thirst,
Which, were they knowne, would be refused first:
Yea, oft we see, yet seeing cannot shonne
The fact, we finde as fondly dar'd as donne.

The Argument of the third Act.

1. In the first scene Cador and Howell incite and exhort Arthur unto warre: who mooved with fatherly affection towards his sonne, notwithstanding their perswasions, resolveth upon peace.

2. In the second scene an Herault is sent from Mordred to commaund Arthur to discharge his armies under paine of death, or otherwise, if he dare, to trie it by battaile.

3. In the third scene Arthur calleth his assistants and soldiers together, whom he exhorteth to pursue their foes.

4. In the fourth scene Arthur, between griefe and despaire, resolveth to warre.

The Argument and manner of the third dumb shewe.

During the musicke after the second act, there came uppon the stage two gentlemen attyred in a peaceable manner, which brought with them a table, carpet and cloth: and then having covered the table they furnisht it with incense on the one ende, and banquetting dishes on the other ende: Next there came two gentlemen apparelled like souldiers, with two naked swordes in their handes, the which they laid a crosse upon the table. Then there came two sumptuously attyred and warlike, who spying this preparation, smelled the incense and tasted the banquet. During the which there came a Messenger and delivered certaine letters to those two that fedde on the daineties:

who, after they had well viewed and perused the letters, furiously flung the banquet under feete, and violently snatching the swordes unto them, they hastily went their way. By the two first that brought in the banquet was meant the servaunts of peace: by the second two were meant the servaunts of warre: by the two last were meant Arthur and Cador. By the Messenger and his letters was meant the defiance from Mordred.

THE THIRD ACT AND FYRSTE* SCENE.

ARTHUR, CADOR, HOWELL.

Arthur. Is this the welcome that my realme prepares?
Be these the thankes I winne for all my warres?
Thus to forbid me land? to slaie my friends?
To make their bloud distaine my countrie shoares?
My sonne (belike) least that our force should faint
For want of warres, preparde us warres himselfe.
He thought (perhaps) it mought impaire our fame
If none rebeld, whose foile might praise our power.
Is this the fruit of Mordred's forward youth,
And tender age, discreet beyond his yeres?
O false and guilfull life! O craftie world!
How cunningly convaiest thou fraude unseene!
Th'ambitious seemeth meeke, the wanton chast;
Disguised vice for vertue vants it selfe.
Thus, (Arthur,) thus hath fortune plaid her part,
Blinde for thy weale, cleare sighted for thy woe.
Thy kingdome's gone, thy phere affordes no faith:
Thy sonne rebels: of all thy wonted pompe
No jot is left, and fortune hides her face.
No place is left for prosperous plight: mishaps
Have roome and waies to runne and walke at will.
Lo (Cador) both our states, your daughters trust,

* It had been originally printed *Second*, but corrected by pasting *Fyrste* over it.

My sonn's respect, our hopes reposde in both!
Cador. The time (puissant Prince) permits not now
To moane our wrongs, or search each severall sore.
Since Arthur thus hath ransackt all abroade
What mervaile ist if Mordred rave at home?
When farre and neare your warres had worne the world,
What warres were left for him but civill warres?
All which requires revenge with sword and fire
And to pursue your foes with presence* force.
In just attempts Mars gives a rightfull doome.
Arthur. Nay, rather (Cador) let them runne their race,
And leave the heavens revengers of my wrong.
Since Brytaines prosperous state is thus debasde
In servile sort to Mordred's cursed pride,
Let me be thrall and leade a private life:
None can refuse the yoake his countrie beares.
But as for warres, insooth, my flesh abhorres,
To bid the battayle to my proper bloud.
Great is the love which nature doth inforce
From kin to kin, but most from sire to sonne.
Howell. The noble necke disdaines the servile yoke:
Where rule hath pleasde, subjection seemeth strange.
A king ought alwaies to preferre his realme
Before the love he beares to kin or sonne.
Your realme destroide is neere restord againe,
But time may send you kine and sonnes inough.
Arthur. How hard it is to rule th' aspiring minde,
And what a kingly point it seemes to those
Whose lordlie hands the stately scepter swaies,
Still to pursue the drift they first decreed,
My wonted minde and kingdome lets me know.
Thinke not but if you drive this hazard on,
He desperate will resolve to winne or die:
Whereof who knowes which were the greater guilt,
The sire to slaie the sonne, or sonne the sire?
Cador. If bloudie Mars doe so extreamly swaie,

* Sic. Qy. *present.*

That either sonne or sire must needs be slaine,
Geve lawe the choice: let him die that deserves.
Each impotent affection notes a want.
No worse a vice then lenitie in kings;
Remisse indulgence soone undoes a realme:
He teacheth how to sinne that winkes at sinnes,
And bids offend that suffereth an offence.
The onely hope of leave increaseth crimes,
And he that pardoneth one, emboldneth all
To breake the lawes. Each patience fostereth wrongs.
But vice severely punisht faints at foote,
And creepes no further off then where it falls.
One sower example will prevent more vice
Then all the best perswasions in the world.
Rough rigour lookes out right, and still prevailes:
Smooth mildnesse lookes too many waies to thrive.
Wherefore, since Mordreds crimes have wrongd the lawes
In so extreame a sort, as is too strange,
Let right and justice rule with rigours aide,
And worke his wracke at length, although too late;
That damning lawes, so damned by the lawes,
Hee may receive his deepe deserved doome.
So let it fare with all that dare the like:
Let sword, let fire, let torments be their end.
Severitie upholds both realme and rule.
Arthur. Ah, too severe! farre from a father's minde.
Compassion is as fit for kings as wrath.
Lawes must not lowre; rule oft admitteth ruthe.
So hate, as if there were yet cause to love:
Take not their lives as foes which may be friends.
To spoile my sonne were to dispoile my selfe:
Oft whiles we seeke our foes, we seeke our foiles.
Lets rather seeke how to allure his minde
With good deserts: deserts may winne the worst.
Howell. Where Cato first had saved a theefe from death,
And after was himselfe condemnd to die,
When else not one would execute the doome,
Who but the theefe did undertake the taske?

If too much bountie worke so bad effects
In thanklesse friends, what for a ruthlesse foe?
Let lawes have still their course: the ill disposde
Grudge at their lives to whom they owe too much.
Arthur. But yet where men with reconciled mindes
Renue their love with recontinued grace,
Attonement frames them friends of former foes,
And makes the moodes of swelling wrath to swage.
No faster friendship than that growes from griefe,
When melting mindes with mutuall ruth relent.
How close the severed skinne unites againe,
When salves have smoothlie heald the former hurts!
Cador. I never yet sawe hurt so smoothly heald,
But that the skarre bewraid the former wound:
Yea, where the salve did soonest close the skinne,
The sore was oftner covered up than cur'de:
Which festering deepe and filde within, at last
With sodaine breach grew greater than at first.
What then for mindes which have revenging moodes,
And ne'r forget the crosse they forced beare?
Whereto if reconcilement come, it makes
The t'one secure, whiles t'other workes his will.
Attonement sield defeates, but oft deferres
Revenge: beware a reconciled foe.
Arthur. Well, what availes to linger in this life,
Which fortune but reserves for greater griefe?
This breath drawes on but matter of mishap:
Death onely frees the guiltlesse from annoies.
Who so hath felt the force of greedie fates,
And 'dur'de the last decree of grislie death,
Shall never yeeld his captive armes to chaines,
Nor drawne in triumph decke the victor's pompe.
Howell. What meane these wordes? Is Arthur forc'de to feare?
Is this the fruit of your continuall warres,
Even from the first remembrance of your youth?
Arthur. My youth (I graunt) and prime of budding yeares,
Puft up with pride and fond desire of praise,
Foreweening nought what perils might insue,

Adventured all and raught to will the raignes:*
But now this age requires a sager course,
Aud will, advisde by harmes, to wisedome yeelds.
Those swelling spirits, the selfesame cause which first
Set them on gog, even fortunes favours quail'd,
And now mine oftnest skapes doe skare me most.
I feare the trappe whereat I oft have tript:
Experience tells me plain that chance is fraile,
And oft, the better past, the worse to come.
Cador. Resist these doubts: 'tis ill to yeeld to harmes.
Tis safest then to dare, when most you feare.
Arthur. As safe sometimes to feare, when most we dare.
A causelesse courage gives repentance place.
Howell. If fortune fawne.
Arthur. Each waie on me she frowns;
For winne I, loose I, both procure my griefe,
Cador. Put case you winne, what griefe?
Arthur. Admit I doe,
What joy?
Cador. Then may you rule.
Arihur. When I may die.
Cador. To rule is much.
Arthur. Small, if we covet naught.
Cador. Who covets not a crowne?
Arthur. He that discernes
The swoord aloft.
Cador. That hangeth fast.
Arthur. But by
A haire.
Cador. Right holdes it up.
Arthur Wrong puls it downe.
Cador. The Commons help the king.
Arthur. They sometimes hurt.
Cador. At least the Peeres.
Arthur. Sield, if allegiance want.
Cador. Yet soveraigntie.

* i. e. *reach'd* or *gave* the reins to will.

Arthur. Not if subjection* faile
Cador. Doubt not: the realme is yours.
Arthur. 'Twas mine 'till now.
Cador. And shall be still.
Arthur. If Mordred list.
Cador. Twere well
Your crowne were wonne.
Arthur. Perhaps tis better lost.
Howell. The name of rule should move a princely minde.
Arthur. Trust me, bad things have often glorious names.
Howell. The greatest good that fortune can affoord.
Arthur. A dangerous good, that wisdome would eschue.
Howell. Yet waigh the hearesaie of the olde renowme.
And fame, the wonderer of the former age,
Which still extolls the facts of worthyest wights,
Preferring no deserts before your deeds.
Even she exhorts you to this new attempt,
Which left untryde your winnings be but losse.
Arthur. Small credit will be given of matters past
To Fame, the flatterer of the former age.
Were al beleev'd which antique bruite imports,
Yet wisdome waighes the perill joinde to praise.
Rare is the fame (marke well all ages gone)
Which hath not hurt the house it most enhaun'st.
Besides, fame's but a blast that sounds a while,
And quickely stints, and then is quite forgot.
Looke, whatsoe'r our virtues have atchiev'd
The Chaos vast and greedy time devours.
To day all Europe rings with Arthur's praise:
'Twill be as husht as if I ne'r had beene.
What bootes it then to venture life or limme
For that which needes e'r long we leave or loose?
Cador. Can blinde affection so much bleare the wise,

* The word *subjection* in this place has been pasted over "allegeance."

Or love of gracelesse sonne so witch the sire,
That what concernes the honour of a prince,
With countries good and subjects just request,
Should lightly be contemned by a king?
When Lucius sent but for his tribute due,
You went with thirteen kings to roote him out.
Have Romanes, for requiring but their owne,
Aboad your nine yeares brunts? Shall Mordred scape,
That wrong'd you thus in honour, queene, and realme?
Were this no cause to stirre a king to wrath,
Yet should your conquests late atchiev'd gainst Rome
Inflame your minde with thirst of full revenge.
Arthur. Indeede, continuall warres have chafte our minds,
And good successe hath bred impatient moodes.
Rome puffes us up, and makes us too, too fierce.
There, Brytaines, there we stand, whence Rome did fall.
Thou, Lucius, mak'st me proude, thou heav'st my minde:
But what? shall I esteeme a crowne ought else
Then as a gorgeous crest of easeless helme,
Or as some brittel mould of glorious pompe,
Or glittering glasse, which whiles it shines it breakes?
All this a sodaine chaunce may dash, and not
Perhaps with thirteene kings, or in nine yeares:
All may not finde so slowe and lingring fates.
What that my country cryes for due remorse,
And some reliefe for long sustained toyles?
By seas and lands I dayly wrought her wrecke,
And spareless spent her life on every foe.
Eche where my souldiers perisht, whilest I wonne:
Throughout the world my conquest was their spoile.
A faire reward for all their deaths, for all
Their warres abroad, to give them civill warres!
What bootes it them, reserv'd from forreine foiles,
To die at home? what ende of ruthelesse rage?
At least let age and nature, worne to nought,
Provide at length their graves with wished groanes.
Pitty their hoary haires, their feeble fists,

Their withered lims, their strengths consumde in campe!
Must they still ende their lives amongest the blades?
Rests there no other fate whiles Arthur raignes?
What deeme you me?—A furie fedde with blood,
Or some Ciclopian, borne and bred for braules?
Thinke on the minde that Arthur beares to peace:
Can Arthur please you no where but in warres?
Be witnesse, heavens, how farre 'tis from minde
Therewith to spoile or sacke my native soile.
I cannot yeeld—it brookes not in my breast
To seeke her ruine whom I erst have rulde.
What reliques now so e'r both civill broyles,
And forreine warres have left, let those remaine:
Th'are fewe inough, and Brytaines fall too fast.

THE SECOND SCENE.

An HERAULT *from* MORDRED.

Howell. Lo, here an Herault sent from Mordred's campe:
A froward message, if I reede aright.
We mought not stirre his wrath—perhaps this may.
Perswasions cannot move a Brytanies moode,
And yet none sooner stung with present wrong.
Herault. Haile, peereless prince! whiles fortune would, our king,
Though now bereft of crowne and former rule.
Vouchsafe me leave my message to impart,
No jotte inforst, but as your sonne affords.
If here you stay but three dayes to an ende,
And not forthwith discharge your bands and hoast,
'Tis Mordreds oath, assure your selfe to die.
But if you finde your courage so to serve,
As for to stand to your defence with force,
In Cornewell (if you dare) he'il trye it out.
Arthur. Is this the choyce my sonne doth send his sire?
And must I die, or trye it if I dare?

To die were ill, thus to be dar'd is worse.
Display my standart forth! let trumpe and drumme
Call souldiers nere to heare their soveraignes heast.

THE THIRD SCENE.

GAWIN *king of Albania*, ASCHILLUS *king of Denmark*, KING OF NORWAY. *A number of Souldiers.*

Arthur. O friends, and fellowes of my weriest toyles,
Which have borne out with me so many brunts,
And desperate stormes of warres and brainsicke Mars!
Loe, now the hundreth month wherein we winne.
Hath all the bloud we spent on forreine coasts,
The wounds and deaths and winters boad abroade,
Deserved thus to be disgrac'd at home?
All Brytaine rings of warres: no towne nor fielde
But swarmes with armed troupes: the mustering traines
Stop up the streetes: no lesse a tumult's raisde,
Then when Hengistus fell, and Horsus fierce
With treacherous truce did overunne the realme.
Each corner threateneth death: both farre and nere
Is Arthur vext. What if my force had faild
And standarde falne, and ensignes all beene torne,
And Roman troupes pursude me at the heeles,
With lucklesse warres assaid in forreine soiles?
Now that our fortune heaves us up thus hie,
And heavens themselves renewe our olde renowme,
Must we be darde? Nay, let that Princocke come,
That knowes not yet himselfe, nor Arthur's force;
That n'er yet waged warres; that's yet to learne
To give the charge: yea, let that Princocke come,
With sodaine souldiers pamper'd up in peace,
And gowned troupes and wantons worne with ease;
With sluggish Saxons crewe, and Irish kernes,
And Scottish aide, and false redshanked Picts,
Whose slaughters yet must teach their former foyle.
They shall perceave with sorrow e'r they part,
When all their toyles be tolde, that nothing workes
So great a waste and ruine in this age,

As doe my warres. O Mordred, blessed sonne!
No doubt these market mates, so highly hier'd,
Must be the stay of thy usurped state.
And least my head, inclining now to yeares,
Should joy the rest which yet it never reapt,
The traitor Gilla, train'd in treacherous jarres,
Is chiefe in armes to reave me of my realme.
What corner, (ah) for all my warres, shall shrowde
My bloodless age? what seate for due deserts?
What towne or field for auncient souldiers rest?
What house? what roofe? what walls for weried lims?
Stretch out againe, stretch out your conquering hands!
Still we must use the force so often usde.
To those that will pursue a wrong with wreke
He giveth all, that once denies the right.
Thou soile, which erst Diana did ordaine
The certaine seate and boure of wandring Brute:
Thou realme, which ay I reverence as my saint,
Thou stately Brytaine, th' ancient tipe of Troy,
Beare with my forced wrongs! I am not he,
That willing would impeach thy peace with warres!
Lo here, both farre and wide I conqueror stand:
Arthur, each where thine owne, thy liedge, thy king:
Condemne not mine attempts; he, onely he,
Is sole in fault that makes me thus thy foe.
Here I renounce all leagues and treats of truce:
Thou, fortune, henceforth art my garde and guide!
Hence peace! on warres run fates: let Mars be judge,
I erst did trust to right, but now to rage.
Goe, tell the boy that Arthur feares no brags:
In vaine he seekes to brave it with his sire.
I come, (Mordred) I come, but to thy paine.
Yea, tell the boy his angry father comes
To teach a novist both to die and dare. [*Herault exit.*
Howell. If we without offence (O greatest guide
Of Brytish name) may poure our just complaints,
We most mislike that your too milde a moode
Hath thus withheld our hands and swords from strokes.
For what? were we behinde in any helpe?

Or without cause did you misdoubt our force,
Or truth so often tried with good successe?
Go to: conduct your army to the fielde;
Place man to man, oppose us to our foes:
As much we neede to worke, as wish your weale.
Cador. Seemes it so sowre to winne by civill warres?
Were it to goare with pike my father's braest;
Were it to rive and cleave my brother's head;
Were it to teare peacemeale my dearest childe,
I would inforce my grudging handes to helpe.
I cannot terme that place my native soyle,
Whereto your trumpets send their warlike sounds.
If case requir'd to batter downe the towres
Of any towne that Arthur would destroy,
Yea, wer't of Brytaines selfe, which most I rede,
Her bulwarkes, fortresse, rampiers, walles and fence,
These armes should reare the rams to runne them downe.
Wherefore, ye princes, and the rest, my mates,
If what I have averd in all your names,
Be likewise such as stands to your content,
Let all your yeas avow my promise true.
Souldiers. Yea, yea, &c.
Aschillus. Wherein, renowmed king, my selfe or mine,
My life, my kingdome, and all Denmarke powre,
May serve your turne, account them all your owne.
King of Norway. And whatso'er my force, or Norwaie aide,
May helpe in your attempts, I vow it here.
Gawin. As heretofore I alwayes servde your heast,
So let this daie he judge of Gawin's trust.
Either my brother Mordred dies the death
By mine assault, or I at least by his.
Arthur. Since thus (my faithfull mates) with vowes alike,
And equall love to Arthur's cause you joyne,
In common care to wreake my private wrongs,
Lift up your ensignes efts, stretch out your strengths;
Pursue your fates; performe your hopes to Mars.
Loe, here the last and outmost worke for blades!

This is the time that all our valour craves:
This time by due desert restores againe
Our goods, our lands, our lives, our weale and all.
This time declares by fates whose cause is best;
This, this condemnes the vanquisht side of guilt.
Wherefore, if for my sake you skorne your selves,
And spare no sword not fire in my defence,
Then, whiles my censure justifies your cause,
Fight, fight amaine, and cleare your blades from crime:
The judge once changde, no warres are free from guilt.
The better cause gives us the greater hope
Of prosperous warres; wherein, if once I hap
To spie the wonted signes, that never failde
Their guide, your threatening looks, your firie eyes,
And bustling bodies prest to present spoile,
The field is wonne! Even then, me thinkes, I see
The wonted wasts and scattered heads of foes,
The Irish carcas kickt, and Picts opprest,
And Saxons slaine to swim in streames of bloud.
I quake with hope. I can assure you all,
We never had a greater match in hand.
March on! Delaie no fates whiles fortune fawnes:
The greatest praise of warres consists in speed.

[*Exeunt Reges et Cohors.*

THE FOURTH SCENE.

CADOR, ARTHUR.

Cador. Since thus (victorious king) your peeres, allies,
Your lords, and all your powres be ready prest,
For good, for bad, for whatsoe'r shall hap,
To spend both limme and life in your defence,
Cast of all doubts and rest your selfe on Mars:
A hopelesse feare forbids a happy fate.

Arthur. In sooth (good Cador) so our fortune fares,
As needes we must returne to woonted force.
To warres we must; but such unhappy warres,

As leave no hope for right or wrong to scape.
My selfe foresees the fate; it cannot fall
Without our dearest blood: much may the minde
Of pensive sire presage, whose sonne so sinnes.
All truth, all trust, all blood, all bands be broke!
The seedes are sowne that spring to future spoyle.
My sonne, my nephew, yea, each side my selfe,
Nerer then all (woe's me) too nere, my foe!
Well: 'tis my plague for life so lewdly ledde.
The price of guilt is still a heavier guilt;
For were it light, that ev'n by birth my selfe
Was bad, I made my sister bad: nay, were
That also light, I have begot as bad,
Yea worse, an heire assignde to all our sinnes.
Such was his birth: what base, what vulgar vice,
Could once be lookt for of so noble blood?
The deeper guilt descends, the more it rootes:
The younger imps effect the huger crimes. [*Exeunt.*

CHORUS.

1.

When many men assent to civill warres
And yeelde a suffradge to inforce the fates,
No man bethinkes him of his owne mishappe,
But turns that lucke unto an other's share.
Whereas if feare did first forewarne ech foyle,
Such love to fight would breed no Brytains bane.
And better were still to preserve our peace,
Then thus to vent for peace through waging warres.
What follie to forgoe such certayne happes,
And in their steede to feede uncertayne hopes!
Such hopes as oft have puft up many a realme,
Till crosse successe hath prest it downe as deepe:
Whiles blind affection fetcht from private cause
Misguiding wit hath maskt in wisedom's vaile,
Pretending what in purpose it abhorr'd.

2.

Peace hath three foes incamped in our breasts;
Ambition, wrath, and envy; which subdude,
We should not faile to finde eternall peace.
'Tis in our powre to joy it all at will,
And fewe there be, but if they will, they may:
But yet even those, who like the name of peace,
Through fond desire repine at peace it selfe,
Betweene the hope whereof, and it it selfe,
A thousand things may fall that further warres.
The very speech sometimes, and treats of truce,
Is slasht and cut a sunder with the sword.
Nor sield the name of peace doth edge our mindes,
And sharpeneth on our furie till we fight;
So that the mention made of love and rest
Is oft a whetstone to our hate and rage.

3.

Lo, here the end that kingly pompe imparts,
The quiet rest that princely pallace plights!
Care upon care, and every day a newe
Fresh rysing tempest tires the tossed mindes.
Who strives to stand in pompe of princely port,
On guiddy top and culme of slippery court,
Findes oft a heavy fate; whiles too much knowne
To all, he falles unknowne unto himselfe.*
Let who so else that list affect the name,
But let me seeme a potentate to none:
My slender barke shall creepe† anenst the shoare,
And shunne the windes that sweepe the waltering waves.
Prowde fortune over slippes‡ the saffest roades,

* *Illi mors gravis incubat,*
Qui notus nimis omnibus,
Ignotus moritur sibi.
Sen. Thyestes, A. II. Chor.

† In the original misprinted *eesepe.*

‡ *overhippes* in the original.

And seekes amidst the surging seas those keeles
Whose lofty tops and tacklings touch the cloudes.

4.

O base, yet happy boores! O giftes of Gods
Scant yet perceav'd! when poudred ermine roabes
With secrete sighes, mistrusting their extreames,
In bailefull breast forecast their foultring fates,
And stirre and strive and storme, and all in vaine;
Behold the peasant poore with tattered coate,
Whose eyes a meaner fortune feedes with sleepe,
How safe and sound the carelesse snudge doth snore.
Low roofed lurkes the house of slender hap,
Costlesse, not gay without, scant cleane within;
Yet safe, and oftner shroudes the hoary haires,
Then haughty turrets, rearde with curious art,
To harbour heads that wield the golden crest.
With endlesse carke in glorious courts and townes
The troubled hopes, and trembling feares doe dwell.

The Argument of the fourth Act.

1. In the first scene Gildas and Conan conferre of the state of Brytaine.

2. In the second scene Nuntius maketh report of the whole battaile, with the death of Mordred, and Arthurs and Cadors deadly wound.

3. In the third scene Gildas and Conan lament the infortunate state of the countrie.

The Argument and manner of the fourth dumb shewe.

During the musicke appointed after the third act there came in a Lady courtly attyred with a counterfaite childe in her armes who walked softly on the stage. From an other place there came a king crowned, who likewise walked on an other part of the stage. From a thirde place there came four souldiers all armed, who spying this Lady and King, upon a sodaine pursued the Lady from whom they violently tooke her childe

and flung it against the walles: she in mournefull sort wringing her hands passed her way. Then in like manner they sette on the king, tearing his crowne from his head, and casting it in pieces under feete, drave him by force away; and so passed themselves over the stage. By this was meant the fruit of warre, which spareth neither man, woman, nor childe, with the ende of Mordred's usurped crowne.

THE FOURTH ACT AND FIRST SCENE.

GILDAS, CONAN.

Gildas. Lord Conan, though I know how hard a thing
It is for mindes trainde up in princely thrones,
To heare of ought against their humor's course,
Yet, sithence who forbiddeth not offence,
If well he may, is cause of such offence,
I could have wisht (and blame me not, my lord)
Your place and countnance both with sonne and sire
Had more prevailde on either side, then thus
T'have left a crowne in danger for a crowne
Through civill warres, our countries woonted woe:
Whereby the kingdom's wound still festring deepe,
Sucks up the mischiefe's humor to the hart.
The staggering state of Brytaines troubled braines,
Headsicke, and sore incumbred in her crowne,
With guiddy steps runnes on a headlong race.
Whereto this tempest tends, or where this storme
Will breake who knowes? but gods avert the worst!

Conan. Now surely (Gildas) as my duety stood
Indifferent for the best to sonne and sire,
So (I protest) since these occasions grewe,
That in the depth of my desire to please,
I more esteemde what honest faith requir'd
In matters meete for their estates and place,
Than how to feede each fond affection, prone
To bad effects, whence their disgrace mought growe.
And as for Mordred's desperate and disloyall plots,

They had been none, or fewer at the least,
Had I prevail'd; which Arthur knowes right well.
But even as counters go sometimes for one,
Sometimes for thousands more, sometimes for none,
So men in greatest countnance with their king
Can worke by fit perswasion sometimes much;
But sometimes lesse, and sometimes nought at all.
Gildas. Well, we that have not spent our time in warres,
But bent our course at peace and countries weale,
May rather now expect what strange event,
And chaunce insues of these so rare attempts,
Then enter to discourse upon their cause,
And erre as wide in wordes, as they in deedes.
Conan. And lo, to satisfie your wish therein,
Where comes a souldier sweating from the camps.

THE SECOND SCENE.

NUNCIUS.

Nuncius. Thou, echo shrill, that hauntst the hollow hilles
Leave off that woont to snatch the latter word.
Howle on a whole discourse of our distresse:
Clippe off no clause; sound out a perfect sense.
Gildas. What fresh mishap (alas) what newe annoy
Removes our pensive mindes from wonted woes,
And yet requires a newe lamenting moode,
Declare! we joy to handle all our harmes:
Our many griefes have taught us still to mourne.
Nuncius. But (ah) my tongue denies my speech his aide:
Great force doth drive it forth; a greater keepes
It in. I rue, surprisde with woontlesse woes.
Conan. Speake on what griefe so e'r our fates afford.
Nuncius. Small griefes can speake, the great astonisht stand.*

* *Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.*
The grief that does not speak,
Whispers the o'er fraught heart and bids it break.
Macbeth, A. IV. sc. 3.

Gildas. What greater sinnes could hap, then what be past?
What mischiefes could be meant, more then were wrought?
Nuncius. And thinke you therse to be an end to sinnes?
No; crime proceedes: those made but one degree.
What mischiefes erst were done terme sacred deedes:
Call nothing sinne but what hath since insu'd.
A greater griefe requires your teares. Behold
These fresh annoyes: your last mishaps be stale.
Conan. Tell on (my friend) suspend our mindes no more.
Hath Arthur lost? hath Mordred woonne the field?
Nuncius. O, nothing lesse! would, gods, it were but so!
Arthur hath woonne, but we have lost the field.
The field? Nay, all the realme and Brytaines bounds.
Gildas. How so? If Arthur wonne, what could we loose?
You speake in cloudes, and cast perplexed wordes.
Unfolde at large, and sort our sorrowes out.
Nuncius. Then list a while: this instant shall unwrappe
Those acts, those warres, those hard events, that all
The future age shall ev'r have cause to curse.
Now that the time drewe on when both the camps
Should meet in Cornwell fields, th' appointed place,
The recklesse troupes, whom fates forbad to live
Till noone or night, did storme and rave for warres.
They swarmde about their guydes, and clustring cald
For signes to fight; and fierce with vproares fell,
They onwards hayld the hasting howres of death.
A direfull frenzie rose: ech man his owne
And publike fates all heedelesse headlong flung.
On Mordreds side were sixtie thousande men;
Some borowed powres, some Brytans bred at home.
The Saxons, Irish, Normans, Pictes and Scottes
Were first in place: the Brytanes followed last.
On Arthurs side there were as manie more:

Islandians, Gothes, Norvegians, Albanes, Danes,
Were forraine aides which Arthur brought from Fraunce;
A trusty troupe and tryed at many a trench.
That now the day was come, wherein our state
For aye should fall, whenceforth might men inquire
What Brytaine was, these warres thus neere bewraide.
Nor could the heavens no longer hide these harmes,
But by prodigious signes portende our plagues.
For lo, er both the campes encountering coapt,
The skies and poles opposed themselves with stormes:
Both East and West with tempestes darke were dim'd
And showres of hayle and rayne outragious powr'd.
The heavens were rent, ech side the lightnings flash'd,
And clowdes with hideous clappes did thundering roare.
The armies, all agast, did senselesse stand,
Mistrusting much both force and foes and fates;
'Twas harde to say which of the two appal'd
Them most, the monstrous ayre or too much feare.
When Arthur spide his souldiers thus amaz'd,
And hope extinct, and deadly dreade drawne on;
My mates (quoth he) the gods doe skowre the skies,
The fates contende to worke some straunge event,
And fortune seeks by stormes in heavens and earth
What pagions* she may play for my behoofe:
Of whom she knowes she then deserves not well,
When lingring ought she comes not at the first.
Thus saide, rejoycing at his dauntlesse minde,
They all revivde and former feare recoylde.
By that the light of Titan's troubled beames
Had pearceing scattered downe the drowping fogges,
And greeted both the campes with mutuall viewe.
Their choller swelles, whiles fell disposed mindes
Bounce in their breastes, and stirre uncertayne stormes.
Then palenesse wanne and sterne, with chearlesse chaunge,
Possessing bleake their lippes and bloodlesse cheekes,
With troublous trembling, shewes their death is nere.
When Mordred sawe the danger thus approacht,

* i. e. *pageants.*

And boystrous throngs of warriers threatning blood,
His instant ruines gave a nodde at fates,
And minde, though prone to Mars, yet daunted pausde.
The hart which promist earst a sure successe,
Now throbs in doubts, nor can his owne attempts
Afforde him feare, nor Arthur's yeelde him hope.
This passion lasts not long: he soon recalls
His auncient guise, and wonted rage returnes.
He loathes delayes, and scorcht with scepters lust,
The time and place, wherein he oft had wisht
To hazarde all upon extreamest chaunce,
He offred spies, and spide pursues with speede.
Then both the armies mette with equall might,
This stird with wrath, that with desire to rule,
And equall prowesse was a spurre to both.
The Irish king whirlde out a poysoned dart,
That lighting pearced deepe in Howel's braines,
A peerelesse prince and nere of Arthur's bloud.
Hereat the aire with uprore lowde resoundes,
Which efts on mountains rough rebounding reares.
The trumpets hoarce their trembling tunes doe teare,
And thundring drummes their dreadfull larums ring.
The standards broad are blowne and ensignes spread,
And every nation bendes his woonted warres.
Some nere their foes, some further off doe wound,
With dart, or sword, or shaft, or pike, or speare;
The weapons hide the heavens; a night composde
Of warrelike engines overshades the field.
From every side these fatall signes are sent,
And boystrous bangs with thumping thwacks fall thicke.
Had both these camps beene of usurping kings,
Had every man thereof a Mordred beene,
No fiercelier had they fought for all their crownes.
The murthers meanlesse waxt, no art in fight,
Nor way to ward nor trie each others skill,
But thence the blade, and hence the bloud ensues.
Conan. But what! did Mordreds eyes indure this sight?

Nuncius. They did; and he himselfe, the spurre of fiends
And Gorgons all, least any part of his
Scapt free from guilt, enflamde their mindes to wrath,
And with a valure more then vertue yeelds,
He chearde them all, and at their backe with long
Outreached speare stirde up each lingring hand.
All furie like, frounst up with frantick frets,
He bids them leave and shunne the meaner sort,
He shewes the kings and Brytaines noblest pieres.
Gildas. He was not now to seeke what bloud to drawe:
He knewe what juice refresht his fainting crowne,
Too much of Arthur's hart. O, had he wist,
How great a vice such vertue was as then,
In civill warres, in rooting up his realme!
O frantike fury, farre from valures praise!
Nuncius. There fell Aschillus stout, of Denmarke king;
There valiant Gawin, Arthurs nephew deare,
And late by Augels death made Albane king,
By Mordreds hand hath lost both life and crowne.
There Gilla wounded Cador, Cornish duke,
In hope to winne the dukedom for his meede.
The Norway king, the Saxons duke, and Picts
In wofull sort fell groveling to the ground.
There prince and peasant both lay hurlde on heapes:
Mars frownde on Arthurs mates: the fates waxt fierce,
And jointly ranne this race with Mordreds rage.
Conan. But with what joy (alas) shall he returne,
That thus returnes the happier for this fielde?
Nuncius. These odds indure not long, for Mars retires,
And fortune, pleasde with Arthurs moderate feare,
Returnes more full, and friendlyer then her woont.
For when he saw the powers of fates opposde,
And that the dreadfull houre was hastened on,
Perplexed much in minde at length resolves,
That feare is covered best by daring most.
Then forth he pitcht: the Saxon duke withstoode,
Whom with one stroke he headlesse sent to hell.

Not farre from thence he spide the Irish king,
Whose life he tooke as price of broken truce
Then Cador foreward prest, and haplie mette
The traytor Gilla, worker of these warres,
Of whom by death he tooke his due revenge.
The remnant then of both the camps concurre,
They Brytaines all, or most, few forreines left:
These wage the warres and hence the deaths insue:
Nor t'one nor t'other side that can destroy
Her foes so fast, as 'tis it selfe destroyed.
The brethren broach their bloud; the sire the sonne's,
The sonne againe would prove by too much wrath,
That he, whom thus he slew, was not his sire.
No blood nor kinne can swage their irefull moodes:
No forreine foe they seeke, nor care to finde:
The Brytaines bloud is sought on every side.
A vaine discourse it were to paint at large
The severall fates and foiles of either side;
To tell what grones and sighes the parting ghosts
Sent forth; who dying bare the fellest breast;
Who chaunged cheare at any Brytaines fall;
Who oftnest strooke; who best bestowde his blade;
Who ventred most; who stoode, who fell, who failde.
Th'effect declares it all: thus far the field.
Of both these hoasts, so huge and maine at first,
There were not left on either side a score,
For sonne and sire to winne and loose the realme.
The which when Mordred saw, and that his sire
Gainst foes and fates themselves would winne the field,
He sigh'd and twixt despaire and rage he cryed,
Here (Arthur) here, and hence the conquest comes:
Whiles Mordred lives, the crowne is yet unwoonne!
Hereat the prince of prowesse much amaz'd,
With thrilling teares and countnance cast on ground,
Did groaning fetch a deepe and earnefull sigh.
Anone, they fierce encountering both concur'd
With griesly lookes and faces like their fates;

But dispar mindes and inward moodes unlike.
The sire with minde to safeguard both or t'one;
The sonne to spoile the t'one or hazard both.
No feare nor fellnes failde on either side:
The wager lay on both their lives and bloods.
At length when Mordred spyde his force to faint,
And felt him selfe opprest with Arthurs strength,
(Oh haplesse lad, a match unmeete for him)
He loathes to live in that afflicted state,
And valiant with a forced vertue, longs
To die the death: in which perplexed minde,
With grenning teeth and crabbed lookes, he cryes,
I cannot winne, yet will I not be wonne.
What! should we shunne our fates or play with Mars,
Or thus defraude the warres of both our blouds?
Whereto doe we reserve our selves, or why
Be we not sought ere this amongest the dead?
So many thousands murthred in our cause,
Must we survive, and neither winne nor loose?
The fates that will not smile on either side
May frowne on both. So saying, forth he flings,
And desperate runs on point of Arthurs sword,
(A sword (alas) prepar'd for no such use)
Whereon engoarde he glides, till nere approcht,
With dying hand he hewes his father's head:
So through his owne annoy, he noyes his liedge,
And gaines by death accesse to daunt his sire.
There Mordred fell, but like a prince he fell;
And as a braunch of great Pendragons grafte
His life breaths out: his eyes forsake the sunne,
And fatall cloudes inferre a lasting clips.
There Arthur staggering scant sustaind him selfe;
There Cador found a deepe and deadly wound;
There ceast the warres, and there was Brytaine lost!
There lay the chosen youths of Mars, there lay
The peerelesse knights, Bellona's bravest traine,
There lay the mirrours rare of martiall praise,
There lay the hope and braunch of Brute supprest:

There fortune laid the prime of Brytaines pride,
There laide her pompe, all topsie turvie turnde. [*Exit.*

THE THIRD SCENE.

GILDAS, CONAN.

Gildas. Come, cruell griefes, spare not to stretch our strengths
Whiles bailefull breasts invite our thumping fists.
Let every signe that mournefull passions worke
Expresse what pitious plightes our mindes amaze.
This day supplants what no day can supply;
These handes have wrought those wastes, that never age,
Nor all the broode of Brute shall e'r repaire:
That future men may joy the surer rest
These warres prevent their birth and nip their spring.
What nations earst the former age subdude
With hourelie toyles to Brytaines yoke, this day
Hath set at large, and backwardes turnde the fates.
Hencefoorth the Kernes may safely tread their bogges;
The Scots may now their inrodes olde renewe,
The Saxons well may vow their former claimes,
And Danes without their danger drive us out.
These warres found not th'effect of woonted warres,
Nor doth their waight the like impression woorke:
There severall fates annoyde but severall men;
Here all the realme and people finde one fate:
What there did reache but to a souldiers death,
Containes the death of all a nation here.
These blades have given this isle a greater wounde
Then tyme can heale—the fruite of civill warres:
A kingdom's hand hath goard a kingdom's heart.
Conan. When fame shall blaze these acts in latter yeares,
And time to come so many ages hence,
Shall efts report our toyles and Brytish paynes;
Or when perhaps our childrens children reade
Our woefull warres displaid with skillfull penne,

They'l thinke they heere some sounds of future facts,
And not the ruines olde of pompe long past:
Twill moove their mindes to ruth, and frame afresh
New hopes and feares and vowes and many a wish,
And Arthur's cause shall still be favour'd most.
He was the joy and hope and hap of all,
The realmes defence, the sole delay of fates;
He was our wall and forte: twice thirteen yeares
His shoulders did the Brytaine state support.
Whiles yet he raign'd no forren foes prevailde,
Nor once could hope to binde the Brytaine boundes;
But still both farre and nere were forc'd to flie;
They thrall to us, we to our selves were free.
But now, and hencefoorth aye, adue that hope,
Adue that pompe, that freedome, rule and all!
Let Saxons now, let Normans, Danes and Scottes
Enjoye our medowes, fieldes, and pleasant plaines!
Come, let us flye to mountaines, cliffes and rockes
A nation hurt, and ne'r in case to heale!
Henceforth, the waight of fates thus falne aside,
We rest secure from feare of greater foile:
Our leasure serves to thinke on former times,
And know what earst we were, who now are thus.

[*Exeunt.*

CHORUS.

1.

O Brytaines prosperous state, were heavenlye powers
But halfe so willing to preserve thy peace,
As they are prone to plague thee for thy warres!
But thus (O Gods) yea, thus it likes you still,
When you decree to turne and touse the worlde,
To make our errors cause of your decrees.
We fretting fume, and burning wax right wood;
We crye for swordes and harmefull harnesse crave;
We rashly rave, whiles from our present rage
You frame a cause of long foredeemed doome.

2.

When Brytaine so desir'd her owne decaie,
That ev'n her native broode would roote her up,
Seamde it so huge a worke (O heavens) for you
To tumble downe and quite subvert her state,
Unlesse so many nations came in aide?
What thirst of spoyle! (O fates) In civill warres
Were you afraide to faint for want of blood?
But yet, O wretched state in Brytaines fond,
What needed they to stoope to Mordred's yoke,
Or feare the man themselves so fearefull made?
Had they but lynckt like friendes in Arthurs bandes,
And joynde their force against the forren foes,
These warres and civill sinnes had soone surceast,
And Mordred, reft of rule, had feard his sire.

3.

Would gods, these warres had drawne no other blood,
Then such as sproong from breasts of forreine foes!
So that the fountaine, fedde with chaungelesse course,
Had found no neerer vents for dearer juyce.
Or if the fates so thirst for Brytish blood,
And long so deeply for our last decaie,
O, that the rest were sparde and safe reserv'd,
Both Saxons, Danes, and Normans most of all!
Heereof, when civill warres have worne us out,
Must Brytaine stand a borrowed blood for Brute.

4.

When prosperous haps, and long continuing blisse
Have past the ripenesse of their budding grouth,
They fall and foulter like the mellow fruite,
Surcharg'd with burden of their own excesse:
So fortune, wearyed with our often warres,
Is forc'd to faint and leaue us to our fates.

If men have mindes presaging ought their harmes,
If ever heavie heart foreweene her woe,
What Brytaine liues so far remov'd from home,
In any ayre, or pole, or coast abroade,
But that even now, through natures sole instinct,
He feels the fatall sword imbrue his breast,
Wherewith his native soyle for aye is slaine!
What hopes and happes lye wasted in these warres!
Who knowes the foyles he suffered in these fieldes?

The Argument of the fift Act.

1. In the first scene Arthur and Cador returned deadlie wounded, and bewaild the misfortunes of themselves and their countrie, and are likewise bewailed of the Chorus.

2. In the second scene the Ghoast of Gorlois returneth rejoycing at his revendge, and wishing ever after a happier fate unto Brytaine; which done, he descendeth where he first rose.

The Argument and manner of the fift and last dumbe shewe.

Sounding the musicke, foure gentlemen all in blacke, halfe armed, halfe unarmed, with blacke skarffes overthwart their shoulders, should come uppon the stage. The first bearing alofte in the one hand, on the truncheon of a speare, an helmet, an arming sworde, a gauntlet, &c. representing the Trophea: in the other hand a target, depicted with a man's hart sore wounded, and the blood gushing out, crowned with a crowne imperiall, and a lawrell garland; thus written in the toppe: *En totum quod superest;* signifying the King of Norway, which spent himselfe and all his power for Arthur, and of whom there was left nothing but his heart to injoy the conquest that insued. The second bearing, in the one hand, a silver vessell full of golde, pearles and other jewels, representing the Spolia: in the other hand a target, with an Olephant and Dragon thereon fiercely

combacting; the Dragon under the Olephant, and sucking by his extreme heate the blood from him, is crushed in pieces with the fall of the Olephant, so as both die at last; this written above: *Victor an victus?* representing the King of Denmarke, who fell through Mordreds wound, having first with his souldiers destroyed the most of Mordred's armie. The third bearing, in the one hand, a Pyramis with a lawrell wreath about it, representing victorie: in the other hand a target with this devise; a man sleeping, a Snake drawing neere to sting him, a Leazard preventing the Snake by fight: the Leazard, being deadlie wounded, awaketh the man, who seeing the Leazard dying, pursues the Snake and kils it; this written above: *Tibi morimur*, signifying Gawin, king of Albanye, slaine in Arthur's defence by Mordred, whom Arthur afterwardes slewe. The fourth bearing, in the one hande, a broken pillar, at the toppe thereof the Crown and Scepter of the vanquisht king, both broken asunder, representing the conquest over usurpation; in the other hand a target, with two Cockes painted thereon, the one lying dead, the other with his winges broken, his eyes pecked out, and the blood everye where gushing foorth to the grounde; he standing upon the dead cocke and crowing over him, with this embleme in the toppe: *Qua vici, perdidi*, signifying Cador deadly wounded by Gilla whom he slewe. After these followed a king languishing, in complet harnesse blacke, brused and battered unto him, besprinkled with blood; on his head a lawrell garland, leaning on the shoulders of two Heraults in mourning gownes and hoods; th' on in Mars his coate of arms, the other in Arthur's, presenting Arthur victoriously, but yet deadly wounded. There followed a page with a target, whereon was portraited a Pellican pecking her blood out of her brest to feede her young ones, through which wound she dyeth; this written in the toppe: *Qua fovi, perii*, signifying Arthur's too much indulgencie of Mordred, the cause of his death. All this represented the dismayed and unfortunate victorie of Arthur, which is the matter of the Act insuing.

THE FIFTH ACT AND FIRST SCENE.

ARTHUR, CADOR, CHORUS.

Arthur. Come, Cador; as our frendship was most firme
Throughout our age, so now let's link as fast.
Thus did we live in warres, thus let us dye
In peace, and arme in arme pertake our fates.
Our wounds, our griefe, our wish, our hap alike,
Our end so neere, all crave eche others helpe.
Cador. O king, beholde the fruite of all our fame
Lo, here our pompe, consumed with our selves:
What all our age with all our warres had woonne,
Loe, here one day hath lost it all at once!
Well, so it likes the heavens: thus fortune gibes;
She hoyseth up to hurle the deeper downe.
Chorus O sacred prince! what sight is this we see?
1. Why have the fates reserv'd us to these woes?
Our onely hope, the stay of all our realme,
The piller of our state, thus sore opprest!
O, would the gods had favour'd us so much,
That as we liv'd partakers of your paines,
And likewise joyde the fruit of your exploytes,
So having thus bereft our soveraignes blisse,
They had with more indifferent doome conjoynd
The subjects both, and soveraignes bane in one!
It now (alas) ingendereth double greefe,
To rue your want and to bewaile our woes.
Arthur. Rue not, my Brytaines, what my rage hath wrought,
But blame your king that thus hath rent your realme.
My meanlesse moodes have made the fates thus fell,
And too much anger wrought in me too much:
For had impatient ire indur'de abuse,
And yeelded where resistance threatned spoyle,
I mought have liv'd in forreine coastes unfoilde,
And six score thousand men had been unmoande!
But wrong, incensing wrath to take revenge,
Preferred chaunce before a better choyce.

Chorus. 'Twas Mordred's wrong, and to unjust desertes,
2. That justly moovde your highnesse to such wrath:
Your claime requir'd no lesse then those attempts:
Your cause right good was prais'd and praide for most.
Arthur. I claimd my crowne; the cause of claime was good,
The meanes to claime it in such sorte was bad.
Yea, rather then my realme and native soile
Should wounded fall, thus brused with these warres,
I should have left both realme and right and all,
Or dur'd the death ordaind by Mordreds oath.
Cador. And yet, so farre as Mars could bide a meane,
You hatelesse sought the safegard of them all:
Whereto the better cause, or badder chaunce,
Did drawe, you still inclinde; preferring oft
The weaker side, sometimes for love, sometimes
For right (as fortune swaide) your sonne, your selfe.
So pittie spar'd what reason sought to spoyle,
Till all at length with equall spoyle was spent.
Chorus. Would gods, your minde had felt no such remorse,
3. And that your foes had no such favour founde!
So mought your friends have had farre frendlier fates,
If rebels for their due deserts had dyde.
The wickeds death is safety to the just;
To spare the traitors was to spoile the true:
Of force he hurtes the good, that helpes the bad.
In that you sought your countries gaine 'twas well:
In that you shunned not her losse, 'twas hard.
Good is the frend that seekes to do us good;
A mighty frend that doth prevent our harmes.
Arthur. Well, so it was; it cannot be redrest;
The greater is my greefe that sees it so.
My lyfe (I feele) doth fade and sorrowes flowe,
The rather that my name is thus extinct:
In this respect, so Mordred did succeede,

O, that my selfe had falne and Mordred livd!
That having conquer'd all my foes but him,
I mought have left you him that conquer'd me.
O heavie, wretched lot! to be the last
That falles! to viewe the buriall of my realme,
Where each man else hath fealt his severall fate,
I onely pine opprest with all their fates!
Chorus. Although your highnesse do susteine such greefe
4. As needes enforceth all your realme to rue,
Yet since such ruth affordeth no releefe,
Let due discretion swage each curelesse sore,
And beare the harmes that run without redresse.
The losse is ours, that loose so rare a prince,
You only win, that see your foe here foilde.
[*The breathlesse body of Mordred, in Armour as he fell, is brought upon the stadge.*
Arthur. A causelesse foe. When warres did call me hence
He was in yeares but young, in wit too olde.
As virtue shineth most in comliest wightes,
When inward gifts are deckt with outward grace,
So did his witte and feature feede that hope
Which falsely trainde me to this wofull hap.
His minde transformed thus, I cannot chuse
But long to see what change his face sustaines.
My blood and kinred, doubled in his birth,
Inspires a mixt and twice descending love,
Which drives my dying vaines to wish his view.
Unhealme his lucklesse head, set bare his face,
That face which earst pleasde me and mine to much.
Chorus. See (worthiest king) the hope of all your realme,
1. Had not his lust to rule prevented all.
Arthur. I see (alas) I see (hide, hide againe:
O spare mine eyes!) a witnesse of my crimes;
A fearfull vision of my former guilte;
A dreadfull horror of a future doome,
A present gaule of minde. O, happie they
Whose spotlesse lives attaine a dreadlesse death!
And thou, O haplesse boye! O, spight of fates!

(What mought I terme thee, nephew, sonne, or both ?)
Alas, how happie should we both have bene,
If no ambitious thought had vext thy head,
Nor thou thus striv'de to reave thy father's rule,
But staide thy tyme, and not forstalde us both !
Cador. The hoat spurde youth that forste the forward steedes,
Whiles needes he would his fathers chariot guide,
Neglecting what his sire had said in charge,
The fires which first he flung about the poles,
Himselfe at last, most wofull wretch, inflamde.
So to much love to hover in the heavens
Made him to paie the price of rash attemptes.
Arthur. What ruth, (ah) rent the wofull fathers hart
That sawe himselfe thus made a sonnelesse sire!
Well, since both heavens and hell conspir'd in one
To make our endes a mirror to the worlde,
Both of incestious life and wicked birth,
Would gods, the fates that linckt our faultes alike
Had also fram'de our minds of friendlier mouldes !
That as our linage had approcht too neere,
So our affections had not swarv'd to farre.
Then mought I livd t'inlarge the Brytaines praise
In rearing efts the first triumphant Troy,
And after, thou succeeding mine attempts,
Have spent thy courage in a juster cause.
But 'twould not be: ambition grewe to greate;
We could not joyne our mindes—our fates we joynde,
And through thy blood a way was made to mine.
Chorus. And must we needes (O worthiest peeres) forgoe,
2. By this untimely fate, our greatest hope?
That in your ripest yeares and likelyest time,
Your chiefest force should on this sodaine fall?
See, see our idle hopes, our brittle trust,*
4. Our vaine desires, our over fickle state!
Which, though a while they sayle on quiet seas,
Yet sinke in surge ere they arive to rode.

* Before this line "Chorus" is again inserted in the margin, as if a new character were about to speak.

O, wofull warres! O Mordreds cursed pride,
That thus hath wrought both king and kingdomes woe!

Cador. Let plaints and mournings passe; set moanes appart.
They made much of themselves, yea, too, too much;
They lov'd to live, that seeing all their realme
Thus topsie turvie turnd, would grudge to dye.

Arthur. Yea sure: since thus (O fates) your censure seemes,
That free from force of forreine foes, there rests
That Mordred reape the glory of our deaths,
B'it so: drive on your doome, work your decree:
We fearlesse bide what bane so e'r you bidde.
And though our ends, thus hastened to your heasts,
Abruptly breake the course of great attempts,
Yet go we not inglorious to the ground:
Set wish a part, we have perfourmd inough.
The Irish king and nation wilde we tamde;
The Scots and Picts and Orcade Isles we wanne;
The Danes and Gothes and Friseland men, with all
The Isles inserted nere those seas; and next
The Germaine king and Saxons we subdude.
Not Fraunce that could prevaile against our force,
Nor lastly Rome, that rues her pride supprest.
Ech forreigne power is parcell of our praise:
No titles want to make our foes affraide.
This onely now I crave (O fortune, erst
My faithfull friend) let it be soone forgot,
Nor long in minde, nor mouth, where Arthur fell:
Yea, though I conqueror die, and full of fame,
Yet let my death and parture rest obscure.
No grave I neede (O fates) nor buriall rights,
Nor stately hearce, nor tombe with haughty toppe;
But let my carcasse lurke; yea, let my death
Be ay unknowen, so that in every coast
I still be feard, and lookt for every houre.

[*Exeunt Arthur and Cador.*

CHORUS.

1.

Lo, here the end that fortune sends at last.
To him whom first she heav'd to highest happe!
The flattering looke, wherewith he long was led;
The smiling fates, that oft had fedde his fame,
The many warres and conquests which he gaind,
Are dasht at once: one day inferres that foile
Whereof so many yeares of yore were free.

2.

O, willing world to magnifie man's state!
O, most unwilling to maintaine the same!
Of all misfortunes and unhappy fates
Th' unhappiest seemes to have been happy once*
'Twas Arthur sole, that never found his joyes
Disturb'd with woe, nor woes reliev'd with joye.
In prosperous state all heavenly powres aspir'd;
Now, made a wretch, not one that spares his spoile!

3.

Yea, fortunes selfe in this afflicted case
Exacts a paine for long continued pompe.
She urgeth now the blisse of woonted weale,
And beares him downe with waight of former fame.

* *In omni adversitate fortunæ infelicissimum genus infortunii est fuisse felicem.*

Boet: de Consol. Philos. L. II.

Dante translates the passage thus:

——— *nessun maggior dolore,*
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria.

Inferno, C. v.

Fortiguerri follows him in these lines.

E perchè rimembrare il ben perduto
Fa piu meschino lo stato presente.

Ricciardetto C. xi. st. 81.

His prayses past be present shame. O, tickle trust,
Whiles fortunes chops and chaungeth every chaunce,
What certaine blisse can we enjoy a live,
Unlesse, whiles yet our blisse endures, we die?

4.

Yea, since before his last and utmost gaspe,
None can be deemde a happy man or blest,
Who dares commit him selfe to prosperous fates,
Whose death preparde attends not hard at hand:
That sithence death must once determine all,
His life may sooner flie, then fortune flitte.

THE SECOND SCENE.

GORLOIS.

Gorlois. Now, Gorlois, swage thy selfe. Pride hath his pay,
Murther his price, adult'rie his desert,
Treason his meede, disloyaltie his doome,
Wrong hath his wreake, and guilt his guerdon beares!
Not one abuse erst offered by thy foes,
But since most sternely punisht, is now purg'd.
Where thou didst fall, ev'n on the selfe same soile,
Pendragon, Arthur, Mordred and their stocke
Found all their foiles: not one hath scapte revenge;
Their line from first to last quite razed out!
Now rest content, and work no further plagues:
Let future age be free from Gorlois ghost:
Let Brytaine hencefort bathe in endlesse weale.
Let Virgo come from heaven; the glorious starre,
The Zodiac's joy, the planets chiefe delight,
The hope of all the yeare, the ease of skies,
The aires reliefe, the comfort of the earth!
That virtuous Virgo, borne for Brytaines blisse;
That peerlesse braunch of Brute; that sweete remaine
Of Priam's state; that hope of springing Troy,

Which time to come, and many ages hence
Shall of all warres compound eternall peace.
Let her reduce the golden age againe,
Religion, ease, and wealth of former world.
Yea, let that Virgo come, and Saturne's raigne,
And yeares, oft ten times tolde, expirde in peace.
A rule that else no realme shall ever finde,
A rule most rare, unheard, unseene, unread;
The sole example that the world affordes.
That (Brytainé) that renowme, yea, that, is thine.
B'it so: my wrath is wrought. Ye furies blacke
And uglie shapes that houle in holes beneath;
Thou Orcus darke, and deepe Avernus nooke,
With duskish dennes out gnawne in gulfes belowe,
Receave your ghastly charge, Duke Gorlois Ghoast.
Make roome! I gladly, thus revengde, returne!
And though your paine surpasse, I greet them tho:
He hates each other heaven, that haunteth hell.
Descendit.

EPILOGUS.

See heere by this the tickle trust of tyme;
The false affiance of each mortall force;
The wavering waight of fates; the fickell trace
That fortune trips; the many mockes of life;
The cheerelesse change; the easelesse brunts and broyles,
That man abides; the restlesse race he runnes.
But most of all, see heere the peerelesse paines;
The lasting panges; the stintlesse greefes; the teares;
The sighes, the grones, the feares, the hopes, the hates,
The thoughts and cares, that kingly pompe impartes.
What follies, then, bewitch th'ambicious mindes,
That thirst for scepters pompe, the well of woes!
Whereof (alas) should wretched man be proude,
Whose first conception is but sinne, whose birth
But paine, whose life but toyle, and needes must dye?
See heere the store of great Pendragons broode,
The t'one quite dead, the t'other hastening on;

As men, the sonne but greene, the sire but ripe,
Yet both forestalde ere halfe their race were run:
As kinges, the mightiest monarches of this age,
Yet both supprest and vanquisht by themselves.
Such is the brittle breath of mortall man,
Whiles humane nature workes her dayly wrackes:
Such be the crazed crests of glorious crownes,
Whiles worldly powers like sudden puffes do passe.
And yet for one that goes, an other comes;
Some borne, some dead: so still the store indures.
So that both fates and common care provide,
That men must needes be borne, and some must rule.
Wherefore ye peeres, and lordings lift aloft,
And whosoe'r in thrones that judge your thralls,
Let not your soveraignty heave you too hye,
Nor their subjection presse them downe too lowe.
It is not pride that can augment your power,
Nor lowlie lookes that long can keepe them safe.
The fates have found a way, whereby ere long
The proude must leave their hope, the meeke their feare.
Who ere receav'd such favor from above,
That could assure one day unto himselfe?
Him whom the morning found both stout and strong,
The evening left all groveling on the ground.
This breath and heate, wherewith mans life is fedde,
Is but a flash or flame, that shines a while,
And once extinct is as it n'er had bene.
Corruption hourely frets the bodies frame;
Youth tends to age, and age to death by kinde.
Short is the race, prefixed is the end;
Swift is the tyme wherein mans life doth run:
But by his deedes t'extend renowme and fame,
That onely vertue workes, which never fades.

FINIS.

Thomas Hughes.

Sat citò, si sat benè: utcunque,
Quod non dat spes, dat optio.

Heere after followe such speeches as were penned by others, and pronounced in stead of some of the former speeches penned by Thomas Hughes.

A speach penned by William Fulbecke, gentleman, one of the societie of Grayes-Inne, and pronounced in stead of Gorlois his first speeche penned by Thomas Hughes, and set downe in the first Scene of the first Acte.

Alecto, thou that hast excluded mee,
From feeldes Elysyan, where the guiltlesse soules
Avoide the scourge of Radamanthus ire,
Let it be lawfull (sith I am remov'd
From blessed islands to this cursed shoare,
This loathed earth, where Arthurs table standes,
With ordure foule of Harpies fierce disteind)
The fates and hidden secrets to disclose
Of blacke Cocytus and of Acheron,
The floudes of death, the lakes of burning soules,
Where hellish frogges doe prophecie revenge;
Where Tartars sprights with carefull heede attende
The dismall summons of Alectos mouth.
My selfe, by precept of Proserpina,
Commaunded was in presence to appeare
Before the synode of the damned sprightes.
In fearfull moode I did performe their hest,
And at my entrance in, th' inchaunted snakes,
Which wrap themselves about the furies neckes,
Did hisse for joy: and from the dreadfull benche*
The supreme furie thus assignde her charge.
Gorlois, quoth she, thou thither must ascend,
Whence through the rancour of malicious foes,
Wearyed with woundes thou didst descend to us.
Make Brytaine now the marke of thy revenge:
On ruthlesse Brytaines and Pendragon's race
Disbursse the treasure of thy hellish plagues.
Let blood contend with blood, father with sonne,

* Printed *benthe.*

Subject with prince, and let confusion raigne.
She, therewithall, enjoynde the duskie cloudes,
Which with their darknesse turnde the earth to hell,
Convert to blood, and poure downe streames of blood.
Cornewell shall groane, and Arthurs soule shall sigh:
Before the conscience of Guenevora
The map of hell shall hang and fiendes shall rage;
And Gorlois' ghost exacting punishment
With dreames, with horrors and with deadly traunce
Shall gripe their hearts: the vision of his corse
Shalbe to them, as was the terror vile
Of flaming whippes to Agamemnons sonne.
And when the trumpet calles them from their rest,
Aurora shall with watry cheekes behold
Their slaughtered bodies prostrate to her beames:
And on the banckes of Cambala shall lye
The bones of Arthur and of Arthurs knightes,
Whose fleete is now tryumphing on the seas,
But shall be welcom'd with a tragedie.
Thy native soyle shalbe thy fatall gulfe,
Arthur, thy place of birth thy place of death.
Mordred shalbe the hammer of my hate
To beate the bones of Cornish lordes to dust.
Ye ravening birdes under Celenos power,
I do adjure you, in Alectoes name,
Follow the sworde of Mordred where he goes:
Follow the sworde of Mordred for your foode.
Aspyring Mordred, thou must also dye,
And on the Altar of Proserpina
Thy vitall blood unto my ghost shall fume.
Heaven, earth and hell concurre to plague the man,
That is the plague of heaven, earth and hell!
Thou bids, Alecto: I pursue my charge.
Let thy Cerastæ whistle in mine eares,
And let the belles of Pluto ring revenge!

One other speeche penned by the same gentleman, and pronounced in steade of Gorlois his last speache penned by Thomas Hughes, and set downe in the second Scene of the fift and last Act.

Death hath his conquest, hell hath had his wish,
Gorlois his vow, Alecto her desire;
Sinne hath his pay, and blood is quit with blood:
Revenge in tryumphe beares the strugling hearts!
Now, Gorlois, pearce the craggie rockes of hell,
Through chinkes whereof infernall sprites do glaunce,
Returne this answere to the furies courte:
That Cornewell trembles with the thought of warre,
And Tamers flood with drooping pace doth flowe,
For feare of touching Camballs bloodie streame.
Brytaine, remember; write it on thy walles,
Which neyther tyme nor tyrannie may race,
That rebelles, traytors and conspirators,
The semenarye of lewde Cateline,
The bastard coovie of Italian birdes,
Shall feele the flames of ever flaming fire,
Which are not quenched with a sea of teares.
And since in thee some glorious starre must shine,
When many yeares and ages are expirde,
Whose beames shall cleare the mist of miscontent,
And make the dampe of Plutoes pit retire,
Gorlois will never fray the Brytans more:
For Brytaine then becomes an angels land.
Both divels and sprites must yeelde to angels power,
Unto the goddesse of the angels land.
Vaunt, Brytaine, vaunt of her renowmed raigne,
Whose face deterres the hagges of hell from thee,
Whose vertues holde the plagues of heaven from thee;
Whose presence makes the earth fruitfull to thee;
And with foresight of her thrice happie daies,
Brytaine I leave thee to an endlesse praise.

Besides these speaches there was also penned a Chorus for the first act, and an other for the second act, by Maister Frauncis Flower, which were pronounced accordingly. The dumbe showes were partly devised by Maister Christopher Yelverton, Maister Frauncis Bacon, Maister John Lancaster and others, partly by the said Maister Flower, who with Maister Penroodocke, and the said Maister Lancaster, directed these proceedings at Court.

EDITION.

Certanie Devises and shewes presented to her Majestie by the Gentlemen of Grayes-Inne, at her Highnesse Court in Greenewich, the twenty eighth day of Februarie in the thirtieth yeare of her Majesties most happy Raigne. At London.—Printed by Robert Robinson. 1587. B. L.

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